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Clavis Universalis:
OR, A
New INQUIRY after TRUTH.
BEING A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
Non-Existence,
OR
Impossibility,
OF AN
External *World.*

By *Arth. Collier*, Rector of *Langford*
Magna, near *Sarum*.

Vulgi Assensus & Approbatio circa Materiam Difficilem, est certum Argumentum Falsitatis istius Opinionis, cui Assentitur. Mr. Malebr. De Inquir. Verit. Lib. 3. Pag. 194.

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Classical University

OR A
New Inquiry into Truth
BEING A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
Non-Existence
OF

Impossibility

External World

By the Rev. John D. ...

...

LONDON:
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THE INTRODUCTION,

Wherein the Question in General is Explained and Stated, and the whole Subject Divided into Two Particular Heads.

TH^O I am verily persuaded, that in the whole Course of the following Treatise, I *shall* or *can* have no other Adversary, but *Prejudice*; yet, having by me no Mechanical Engine proper to remove it; nor, being able to invent any other Method of attacking it, besides that of fair Reason and Argument; rather than the World should finish its Course without once offering to enquire in what Manner it Exists, (and for One Reason more, which I need not name, unless the End desired were more hopeful); I am at last, after a Ten Years Pause and Deliberation, content to put myself upon the Trial of the Common Reader, without pretending to any better Art of

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gaining

gaining him on my Side, than that of Dry Reason, and Metaphysical Demonstration.

The *Question* I am concerned about is in general this, whether there be any such Thing as An *External* World. And my Title will suffice to inform my Reader, that the *Negative* of this Question is the Point I am to demonstrate.

In order to which, let us *first Explain the Terms*. Accordingly, by *World*, I mean whatsoever is usually understood by the Terms, *Body, Extention, Space, Matter, Quantity, &c.* if there be any other Word in our *English* Tongue, which is Synonymous with all or any of these Terms. And now nothing remains but the Explication of the Word *External*.

By this, in *General*, I understand the same as is usually understood by the Words, *Absolute, Self-existent, Independent, &c.* and this is what I deny of all *Matter, Body, Extention, &c.*

If this, you'll say, be *all* that I mean by the Word *External*, I am like to meet with no Adversary at all, for who has ever *affirmed*, that Matter is Self-existent, Absolute or Independent?

To this I Answer, what others hold, or have held in Times past, I shall not here inquire. On the contrary, I shou'd be glad to find by the Event, that all Mankind were agreed

agreed in that which I contend for as the Truth, viz. that *Matter is not, cannot be Independent, Absolute, or Self-existent.* In the mean Time, whether they are so or no, will be tried by this.

Secondly, and more particularly, That by not Independent, not Absolutely Existent, not External, I mean and contend for nothing less, than that all Matter, Body, Extention, &c. exists in, or in Dependance on Mind, Thought, or Perception, and that it is not capable of an Existence, which is not thus Dependant.

This perhaps may awaken another to demand of me how? To which I as readily Answer, just *how* my Reader pleases, provided it be *somehow*. As for *Instance*, we usually say, *An Accident* Exists in, or in Dependance on its proper Subject; and that its very Essence, or Reality of its Existence, is *so to Exist*. Will *this* pass for an *Explanation* of my Assertion? If so, I am content to stand by it, in this Sense of the Words. Again, We usually say, (and Fancy too we know what we mean in saying,) that a Body Exists in, and also in Dependance on its proper *Place*, so as to Exist necessarily in some Place or other. Will this Description of *Dependance* please my inquisitive Reader? If so, I am content to join Issue with him, and contend that all Matter Exists

in, or as much Dependantly *on*, Mind, Thought, or Perception, to the full, as any Body Exists in Place. Nay, I hold the Description to be so Just and Apposite, as if a Man should say, A Thing is *like itself*: For I suppose I need not tell my Reader, that when I affirm that All Matter Exists in *Mind*, after the same Manner as *Body* Exists in *Place*, I mean the very same as if I had said, that *Mind itself is the Place of Body*, and *so* its Place, as that it is not capable of Existing in any *other Place*, or in Place after any *other Manner*. Again *Lastly*, It is a common Saying, that an *Object of Perception* Exists in, or in Dependance on its respective *Faculty*. And of these Objects, there are many who will reckon with me, *Light, Sounds, Colours*, and even some *material Things*, such as *Trees, Houses, &c.* which are seen, as we say, *in* a Looking-Glass, but which are, or ought to be owned to have no Existence but *in*, or *respectively on*, the Minds or Faculties of those who perceive them. But to please all Parties at once, I affirm that I know of *no manner*, in which an Object of Perception exists *in*, or *on* its respective Faculty, which I will not admit in this Place, to be a just Description of that Manner of *In-existence*, after which All Matter that Exists, is affirmed by me to *Exist in Mind*. Nevertheless, were I to speak

ſpeak my Mind freely, I ſhou'd chuſe to compare it to the In-exiſtence of *ſome*, rather than *ſome other* Objects of Perception, particularly ſuch as are Objects of the Senſe of Viſion; and of theſe, *thoſe more eſpecially*, which are allowed by others, to Exiſt wholly in the Mind or Viſive Faculty; ſuch as Objects ſeen in a *Looking-Glaſs*, by Men *Diſtemper'd, Light-headed, Ecſtatic,* &c. where not only Colours, but intire Bodies, are perceived or ſeen. For theſe Caſes are exactly parallel, which that Exiſtence which I affirm of all Matter, Body, or Extention whatſoever.

Having endeavoured, in as diſtinct Terms as I can, to give my Reader Notice of what I mean by the Proposition I have undertaken the Defence of, it will be requiſite in the *next Place*, to declare in as plain Terms, what I do not mean by it.

Accordingly, I declare in the *First Place*, That in affirming that there is no External World, I make no Doubt or Queſtion of the *Exiſtence* of Bodies, or whether the Bodies which are ſeen *Exiſt or not*. It is with me a firſt Principle, that *whatſoever is ſeen, Is*. To Deny, or Doubt of this, is errant *Sceptiſm*, and at once unqualifies a Man for any Part or Office of a Diſputant, or Philoſopher; ſo that it will be remembered from this Time, that my Enquiry is

not concerning the *Existence*, but altogether of the *Extra-existence* of certain Things or Objects ; or, in other Words, what I affirm and contend for, is not that Bodies do not *Exist*, or that *the* External World does not Exist, but that such and such Bodies, which are *supposed to Exist*, do not Exist *Externally* ; or in universal Terms, that there is no such Thing as an *External World*.

Secondly, I profess and declare, that notwithstanding this my Assertion, I am persuaded that I see all Bodies just as other Folks do ; that is, the visible World is seen by me, or, which is the same, *seems* to me to be as much External or Independant, as to its Existence, on my Mind, Self, or Visive Faculty, as any Visible Object does, or can be pretended to do or be, to any other Person. I have neither, as I know of, another Nature, nor another Knack of seeing Objects, different from other Persons, suitable to the Hypothesis of their Existence which I here contend for. So far from this, that I believe, and am very sure, that this *seeming*, or (as I shall desire Leave to call it) *Quasi* Externity of Visible Objects, is not only the Effect of the Will of God, (as it is his Will that *Light* and *Colours* shou'd *seem* to be without the Soul, that *Heat* shou'd *seem* to be in the *Fire*, *Pain* in

in the *Hand, &c.*) but also that it is a natural and necessary *Condition* of their Visibleness; I wou'd say, that thro' God shou'd be supposed to make a World, or any one Visible Object, which is *granted* to be not External, yet by the Condition of its being seen, it wou'd, and must be *Quasi External* to the Perceptive Faculty, as much so to the full, as is any material Object usually seen in this Visible World.

Moreover, *Thirdly*, When I Affirm that all Matter Exists *Dependantly on Mind*, I am sure my Reader will allow me to say, I do not mean by this, that Matter or Bodies Exist in *Bodies*. As for Instance, when I affirm or say, that the World, which I see Exists in my Mind, I cannot be supposed to mean, that one Body Exists in another, or that all the Bodies which I see Exist in *that*, which common Use has taught me to call *my Body*. I must needs desire to have this remembred, because Experience has taught me how apt Persons are, or will be, to mistake me in this Particular.

Fourthly, When I affirm that *this* or *that* Visible Object Exists in, or Dependantly on, my *Mind*, or *perceptive Faculty*, I must desire to be understood to mean no more than I say, by the Words *Mind* and *Perceptive Faculty*. In like Manner I wou'd be understood, when I affirm in General, that all

Matter or Body Exists in, or Dependantly on, *Mind*. I say this to acquit myself from the Imputation of holding, that the *Mind causes* its own Ideas, or Objects of Perception; or, lest any one by a Mistake shou'd Fancy that I affirm, that Matter depends for its Existence on the *Will* of Man, or any *Creature* whatsoever. But now, if any such Mistake shou'd arise in another's Mind, he has wherewith to rectifie it; in as much as I assure him, that by *Mind*, I mean *that* Part, or Act, or Faculty of the Soul, which is distinguished by the Name *Intellective*, or *Perceptive*, as in *Exclusion* of *that other* Part, which is distinguished by the Term *Will*.

Fifthly, When I affirm that all Matter Exists in Mind, or that no Matter is External, I do not mean that the World, or any visible Object of it, which I (for Instance) see, is Dependant on the Mind of any *other* Person besides myself; or that the World, or Matter, which any other Person sees, is Dependant on mine, or any other Person's Mind, or Faculty of Perception. On the contrary, I *contend* as well as *grant*, that the World which *John* sees is External to *Peter*, and the World which *Peter* sees is External to *John*. That is, I hold the Thing to be the same in this, as in any other Case of Sensation; for Instance, that
of

of *Sound*. Here Two or more Persons, who are present at a Consort of Music, may indeed in some Sense be said to hear the *same* Notes or Melody; but yet the Truth is, that the Sound which *one* hears, is not the *very same* with the Sound which *another* hears, because the Souls or Persons are supposed to be different; and therefore, the Sound which *Peter* hears, is External to, or Independant on the Soul of *John*, and that which *John* hears, is External to the Soul or Person of *Peter*.

Lastly, When I affirm that no Matter is altogether External, but necessarily Exists in some Mind or other, exemplified and distinguished by the proper Names of *John*, *Peter*, &c. I have no Design to affirm, that every Part or Particle of Matter, which does or can Exist, must needs Exist in some *Created* Mind or other. On the contrary, I believe that infinite Worlds might Exist, tho' not one single Created, (or rather merely Created,) Mind were ever in Being. And as in Fact there are Thousands and Ten Thousands, I believe, and even contend, that there is an *Universe*, or *Material World* in Being, which is, at least, numerically different from every material World perceived by meer Creatures. By this, I mean the great *Mundane Idea* of Created (or rather Twice Created) Matter,

ter, by which all Things are produced; or rather, (as my present Subject leads me to speak,) by which the Great God gives Sensations to all his thinking Creatures, and by which Things that are not, are preserved, and order'd in the same Manner as if they were.

And now I presume and hope, that my Meaning is sufficiently understood, when I affirm, that all Matter which Exists, Exists in, or Dependantly on, Mind; or, that there is no such Thing as an External World.

Nevertheless, after all the Simplicity to which this Question seems already to be reduced, I find myself necessitated to divide it into *Two*. For, in order to prove that there is no External World, it must needs be one Article to shew that the *Visible* World is not external, and when this is done, tho' in *this* all be indeed done, which relates to any Opinion yet maintained by Men, yet something still is wanting towards a full Demonstration of the Point at *Large*, and to come up to the Universal Terms, in which the Question is expressed.

Accordingly, I shall proceed in this Order. *First* to shew, that the Visible World is not External. Secondly, to demonstrate more at large, or simply, that

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an External World is a Being utterly impossible. Which Two shall be the Subjects of Two distinct Parts or Books.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

*Wherein the First Question is considered,
viz. Whether the Visible World is
External or not.*

F*irst* then I affirm that the *Visible* World is not External. By the *Visible* World, I mean every material Object, which is, or *has been*, or *can be* seen. I say *can be* seen, (which is the Import of the Word *Visible*,) in order to comprehend whatever Worlds there are, or may be conceived to be, (besides that which we see who live on this Earth,) whether *Planetary*, *Celestial*, or *Supercelestial* Worlds. Be they what, or how many they will, supposing they are *Visible*, that is, actually seen by some particular Souls or other, they are all understood and comprehended within the Notion of *the Visible World*: For my Subject leads me to affirm, that a
Visible

Visible World, *as Visible*, is not External. Some perhaps will be apt to prevent my Inquiry, by urging that it is not capable of being a Question, whether the Visible World be External or not; it being *self-evident*, that a Visible Object, *as Visible* or *Seen*, is and must be External. That an Object's being seen *as External*, is a simple and direct Proof of its being *really* External, and consequently that there is no Foundation for the Distinction between the *Quasi* and *Real* Externity of a Visible Object, which I laid down in my Introduction.

I Answer, Then indeed I am blown up at once, if there be any Truth or Consequence in this Objection. But the best of it is, that I had never any Design to *Palm* this Distinction upon my Reader *gratis*, foreseeing it might stick with him. Nevertheless, he must allow me the common Benefit of *Words*, whereby to explain my Meaning; and this was all the Liberty I presumed upon, in premising that Distinction. Whether the *Seeming* Externity of a Visible Object, be indeed an Argument of its *Real* Externity, I leave to be proved by all those who will affirm it. However, it cannot be denied, but that it is capable of being a *Question*. For tho' the Truth be against me, yet Visible Objects *seem to be External*; and herein we all agree; so that
one

one Member of the Distinction is allowed by all to be Good. If so, what shou'd hinder it from being a fair Question, whether this *Seeming* be an Argument of its *Real Externity*? For my own Part, I am far from taking it for granted, that this Distinction is Good, or built upon real Facts, (tho' every one must allow the Distinction to be good in General between *Real* and *Apparent*,) for this wou'd be to take a main Part of the *last Question* for granted. But then on the other Hand, it cannot be expected that I shou'd admit an Adversary to take it for granted, that this Distinction (with regard to Visible Objects) is not good; in other Words, that there is no Difference *in the Thing*, between *Seeming* and *Real Externity*, or between *Visible* and *External*. For this wou'd be to grant away at once the whole Matter I am concerned for. If therefore another wou'd have me grant or allow this, let him fairly set himself to shew, wherein lyes the Connexion between these Two different Terms, or *prove* what is affirmed in the Objection, namely, that a Visible Object, *as* Visible or Seen, *is* and *must* be External. Here, the *least* Thing to be expected is, that he point or single out *one* Visible Object, which is *allowed*, or may be plainly *proved* to be External. In the mean Time, or till something

thing of this Kind be attempted by another, all must allow me the Liberty of *Doubting*, whether there be any such Connexion or not; at least bear with me, whilst I am content to *prove* that there is no such Connexion.

Let this then be the *First* Step by which I rise to my last Conclusion; namely, to shew, that the *Seeming* Externity of a Visible Object, is no Argument of its *Real* Externity. Or, in other Words, that a Visible Object *may* Exist in, or Dependantly on, the Mind of him that seeth it, notwithstanding that it is *seen*, and is allowed to *seem* to be External to, or Independant on it.

S E C T. I.

That the seeming Externity of a Visible Object, is no Argument of its Real Externity.

TO shew this, I think the best Way will be by *Instances*, or an *Induction* of particular Objects, which, tho' they *seem* as much to be External, as any Objects whatsoever; yet are, or must needs be granted,

granted, to be not External. These, to speak as orderly as I can, shall be divided into *Two* Sorts, *Possibles* and *Actuals*.

By *Actuals* are meant certain Instances of Perception, which are *Ordinary* and *Usual*, or which, at least, *have been* in Fact. And by *Possibles* are meant certain Instances of Perception, which have never indeed been Fact, but which need nothing but an *Increase of Power*, to make them so at any Time. And,

First, for the *Last* of these, viz. of *Possible* Instances of Perception; where the Object perceived is allowed to be not *External*, tho' it *appears* to be as much so as any Objects whatsoever. Of this Sort I shall mention *Two*, and that according to their Degrees of Actuality. And,

First, For that which is the *least Actual* of the *Two*, which shall be an Instance of a Man's perceiving a Creature, which has not so much as in its Kind, Existed Externally; (supposing here for the present that some Things have *so* Existed;) I mean, one of those they usually call *Chimæra's*. Of these there are Distinctions and Names, of which one is *Centaur*.

A Centaur, is an *Ens* or *Being*, partly Horse, and partly Man: A mere Fiction of Poets or Painters; that is, a Creature which has never Existed, or been Seen, any other-
wise

wise than in *Imagination*. But in *Imagination* it has, or is supposed to have been Seen, and as such it has *Existed*, and does or may continually Exist.

Well now, let some particular Person be supposed, in whose Mind or *Imagination*, a Centaur does, this Instant, Exist; and let his Name be called *Apelles*. *Apelles* then perceives a Centaur, and that vividly or distinctly enough to draw the Picture of it, or describe its Shape and Proportions with his Pencil.

These Things supposed, I demand *how* does this Centaur seem to *Apelles*? Either as *within* or *without* him, whilst he fixes the Eye of his Mind upon it, so as to describe it? For an Answer to this Question, I appeal to every Person Living, whether an Object of *Imagination* does not seem or appear to be as much External to the Mind, which sees it, as any Object whatsoever; that is as any of those which are called Objects of *Vision*. If so, I might here observe, that we have already one Instance of an Object perceived, which, as perceived, is seen as without, yet is *indeed* not so, but altogether Existent in, or Dependant on, the Mind that perceives it. But I am content to suppose that it will be urged to me, that this is not an Instance to the intended Purpose, which was not concerning *Imagination*,
but

but *Sense*, and particularly that of *Vision*. Well, I submit to the Charge of Fact, lest I should seem too rigorous, and so overstrain my Point : But then my Reader will agree with me in the Conclusion I contend for, if from this very Instance I shew him a *like possible Case of Vision*, wherein the Object perceived is *not External*.

In speaking of *Possibles allowed* to be such, I have *all Power* at my Command, or the Liberty of supposing the Power of *God himself* to produce Effects for me. Suppose then an Almighty Power ready at hand to produce this *Imagined Centaur* into an Object of *Vision* ; What is to be done in this Case, or to this End? Must an External Centaur be *Created* that *Apelles* may see it? Perhaps so, But is there no *easier* or *shorter* Way than *this* for *Apelles* to see a Centaur? Nay, but he is *supposed already* to see a Centaur, only that we do not use to call it *seeing*, but *imagining*, because of the *Faint* and *Languid* Manner after which he seeth it. But if this be all the *Difference* between what we use to call *seeing* and *imagining*, they may easily coincide, without any considerable Difference in the Object perceiv'd, or in any Thing else with which we are at present concern'd. For what is that which is perceiv'd or seen, when an Object *Visible* is before our Eyes? Why nothing that I can

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think

think of but Figure and Colour? Well, *Apelles* imagines or perceives a Centaur; he perceives then a certain *Figure* which we call a Centaur; he perceives it indeed in a certain *Languid* Manner, or not so vividly as some Objects are perceived, which greater Vividness we use to call *Colour*, but still he is supposed to perceive a Centaur. If so, add *Colour* to this Perception, and the Centaur which was before only imagined, is now become a *Seen* or *Visible* Object, and yet still, as being same Figure or Extension, is as much in his Mind, or as little *External*, as it was before.

Perhaps my Reader will not be content to grant me, that the Difference between Imagination and Vision is only that of *more* and *less*, or, that an Object in *One* is perceived *with* or with *such a Degree* of Colour, and in the *Other*, either with Figure only, or with a much *less Degree* of Colour. Perhaps so, but he will doubtless grant *this*, that whilst *Apelles* imagines a Centaur, God may so act upon his Mind, as that by Degrees he shall perceive it *more* and *more* distinctly or vividly, till he comes to perceive it to the *full as vividly* as any Object is or can be perceived or seen. If so, I leave it with *them* to distinguish Imagination from Vision any otherwise than I have done, who allow not my Manner of doing it; and in
the

the mean Time must demand of them *One Mark or Sign* whereby to distinguish the Centaur *thus vividly perceived*, or *supposed* to be perceived, from an Object which they would call *Truly Visible*, or *Seen*.

The *Other* Instance which I promis'd to give is indeed much like the former, only that the Object perceiv'd, (or one like it,) is here suppos'd to *Exist amongst the ordinary Objects of the Visible World*; and it is this.

When a Man with his *Eyes shut*, or at *Noon-day*, has a mind to think on the *Moon at Full*, it is certain *he may* think on it. This Moon, as being *Truly perceived*, *Truly Exists*: It Exists also in the Mind of him that seeth it, and that so really and entirely, that, tho' every External Object were suppos'd to be annihilated, or not One besides myself had ever been Created, yet still I might see or imagine a Moon.

Well now, suppose as before, that whilst I thus imagine a Moon, God should so act upon my Mind by insensible Degrees, or otherwise, as to make this imagined Moon appear *Brighter and Brighter* to me, till it comes to be to the *full as Vivid as the Moon* suppos'd to be in the Heavens, or as any Moon whatsoever. In this Case, I say, we have an *Instance of a Visible or Seen Object*, which, to *Appearance*, is *as much External* as any Object whatsoever, but is not indeed

External : Which therefore is a Demonstration that the *Visible* Externity of an Object is no *Argument* for any *Real* Externity of it.

II. And now from *Possible* I come to *Actual Cases*, or Instances of the same Thing. And here,

I. The *First* shall be of certain *Other* Sensations, or Modes of Sensible Perception, wherein the Objects perceiv'd Exist *only* in the Mind, tho' they *seem* to Exist *Externally* to, or *Independant on*, it ; such as *Sounds, Smells, Tastes, Heat, Pain, Pleasure, &c.*

If any one doubts whether these Things be *within* or *without* the Souls or perceptive Faculties of those who *sense* them, they must excuse me if I am unwilling to digress so far as to undertake the Proof of what I here suppose ; and that *partly* on the Account of its Evidence ; but I am content to say *chiefly*, because the Thing has been already done oftento my Hands, particularly by *Mr. Des Cartes, Mr. Malebranche, and Mr. Norris*, in several Parts of their much Celebrated Writings, whither I chuse to refer my Inquisitive Reader.

Supposing then that these Objects of Sense Exist truly and really in their respective Faculties, I am sure no one will doubt whether they do not *seem* to Exist altogether

ther *without* them. For this I appeal to every one's Experience, and to the Difficulty which so many find in believing, that they do not *indeed* Exist without them. If so, we have then *several Instances together* of certain Objects of *Sense*, which, notwithstanding that they *seem as much External* as any Objects whatsoever, yet *really and truly are not External*.

“ Moreover, there is of this Sort a
 “ *Particular Instance* often mentioned by
 “ Philosophers, which is very home to this
 “ Purpose ; and that is, of a Man's feeling
 “ Pain in a Member which he has *lost*.
 “ This is usually said to depend on cer-
 “ tain Motions made by certain Humours
 “ or Animal Spirits on the Nerves or Fi-
 “ bres of the remaining Part ; but of this I
 “ make no other Use or Account at pre-
 “ sent, than only to collect from hence,
 “ that the Effect would still be the same
 “ tho' the Absent Member were as well
 “ *annihilated as lost*. If so, I ask, *where* is
 “ this Member which the Man is sensible
 “ of? Where, I say, is, or can it be, but
 “ in the Mind or Soul of him that feels it ?

2. The *next Instance* shall be of *Light* and *Colours*, which are allowed to be Objects properly *Visible*. These *appear or seem* as much at a Distance or External as any Objects whatsoever, yet scarce any Thing is more evident than that they are *not* so. C 3 In

In this I speak more *particularly* to *Cartesians* ; and on this Occasion I desire to ask them, how has it come to pass, that *they*, who all agree that *Light* and *Colours* are not *External*, should yet happen to overlook the same Conclusion, with relation to the *Bodies*, *Subjects*, or *Extensions*, which sustain these *Accidents* ? For can any Thing be more true or *proper* than to say, *such a Body is Luminous*, or, *of this or that Colour* ? Or more evident than that *Light* and *Colour Exist in*, or are *Accidents of Matter* ? And shall we say that the *Subjects Exist without*, and the *Accidents within the Soul* ? Even those very *Accidents* whose *totum Esse* is *Inesse* in their particular or respective *Subjects* ? But to return : As for those who are not yet content so much as to grant that *Light* and *Colours Exist in the Soul*, I must refer them, *as before*, for their Satisfaction in this Point. In the mean Time this will doubtless be admitted by all Sides or Parties, that if *Light* and *Colours* are not *External*, I have given them an Instance of some *Visible Objects*, which are very apparently, but yet are not really *External*, which is all the Labour I shall be at in this Particular.

3. My next Instance shall be of those who on some Occasions see many Objects which no other Persons see, and are unanimously granted

to

to have no Existence, *but* in the Minds or Faculties of those who see them. *Such* are those who see Men walking the Streets with Halters about their Necks, or with Knives sticking in their Bodies. *Such* are those who see themselves or others in the Figures of Cocks, Bulls, or Wolves, or with the Equipage of Sovereign Princes. And *such*, Last-ly, are those who see and converse with several Persons, see Houses, Trees, &c. which no other Person seeth, or perhaps hath ever seen.

These, you will say, are *Mad* or *Light-headed*. Be it so, that they are Mad, or Drunk, or whatsoever else you will, yet unless we will be like them we must needs grant the Fact, *viz.* that they *really* see the Things or Objects they pretend to see. They see them also *as External* or *without them*; and yet we all grant, and even contend, that they are not without them, which is as much as I am here concerned for.

4. *Another* Instance of *Vision*, which infers the same Conclusion, is of Persons whose Minds or Perceptive Faculties are acted in an Extraordinary Manner by the *Spirit of God*: *Such* was *Ezekiel*, *such* was *St. John*, the Author, to us, of the *Apocalypse*, and *such* have been many others: *These* were neither *Mad* nor *Light-headed*, and yet they tell us of strange Things which

they have seen *as Evidently*, and *as Externally* to *Appearance*, as any Objects whatsoever; *but yet* such Things as never really Existed *without* the Minds, or perceptive Faculties of those who are supposed to have seen them.

5. Another Instance of Vision which infers the same Conclusion, shall be one of which every Person may have the Experience. Let a Man, whilst he looks upon any Object, as suppose the Moon, Press or Distort one of his Eyes with his Finger; this done, he will perceive or see *Two Moons*, at some Distance from each other; *one*, as it were, *proceeding* or *sliding* off from the *other*.

Now both these Moons are equally External, or *seen* by us *as* External; and yet *one* at least of these is not External, there being but *one* Moon supposed to be in the Heavens, or *without* us. Therefore an Object is *seen* by us *as* External, which is *not indeed* External, which is *again* the Thing to be shewn.

6. The last Instance which I shall mention to this Purpose, shall be one likewise of which we have every Day's Experience, but yet is little observed; and that is, the usual Act of seeing Objects in a *Looking-glass*.

Here I see *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, even a *whole expanded World*, as Distinctly, as Externally, as any material Objects are capable of being seen.

Now

Now the *Question* (if it can be any Question) is, *where* are these Things? Do they Exist *within* or *without* my Soul, or perceptive Faculty? If it is said that they Exist *without*, I must still ask *Where*? Are they numerically the same with that Sun, &c. which I see without a Glass, and are here, for a Time, supposed to be External? This cannot be for several Reasons: As *first*, I see them *both together*; that is, I as evidently see *Two distinct* Objects, (suppose Suns,) as ever I saw Two Houses, Trees, &c. that is, I have the *same simple Evidence of Sense* for their being *Two distinct* Suns, as I have, or *can* have, that *One* Object is *not Two*, or *Two One*, or that *One* is not *Ten Thousand*. *Secondly*, I can, and have often seen *one* of these Suns, viz. either of them singly, without seeing the *other*. Again *Thirdly*, instead of *Two*, I have sometimes seen at least *Twenty* or *Thirty* Suns, all equally seen, equally seen as External. Moreover *Fourthly*, we often see the Object *in* the Glass very *different* from that which is like it, and goes by the same Name, *without* the Glass. As for Instance, *one* shall be in *Motion*, whilst the *other* is at *Rest*; *one* shall be of *one Colour*, nay also, *Figure* and *Magnitude*, and the *other* shall be of *another*; to which may be added many other particular Differences
of

of which every one's Experience will prove a sufficient Testimony.

If then an Object seen as *in* a Glass, be not the same with any seen *without* a Glass; and if it be still affirmed that it Exists *without* the Soul which perceives it, I still proceed to demand, *Where* does it Exist? Shall we say that it Exists in the Glass? Perhaps so, but this must be made at least Intelligible, before another can Assent to it. What, a whole expanded World in a piece of Glass? Well, let those who think so enjoy their own Opinion. For my Part, I freely own I am not a Match for such Reasoners; and so I grant, as to a Superior Genius, whatsoever they shall be pleased to require of me. As likewise to those who shall seriously contend, that the Objects seen as in the Glass, are not indeed in the *Glass*, but in the *Eye* of him that seeth them; not thinking it possible to urge any Thing to the contrary, which will be of the least Weight or Moment to alter their Opinion.

Nevertheless, I expect to find some, either of the learned or unlearned Part of the World, who, upon the first Suggestion, will very readily agree with me, that the Objects seen as in the Glass, are not external to the Mind which sees them; and indeed this is to me so simply evident, that

I cannot induce my Mind to set formally about the Proof of it, and do almost repent me that I have said so much already on this Head, or that I did not at once lay it down as a Thing universally taken for granted, at least which wou'd be granted upon the first Suggestion. However, 'till such time as I am apprized of an Adversary, I will *now* conclude that the Objects seen as in a Glass, are not External to the Soul, or Visive Faculty of him that seeth them; and consequently, that I have here again given an Instance of a Visible Object, as much External to *Appearance*, as any Object whatsoever, *but* which is not *indeed* External.

Now from all and every of these Instances it follows, that the *Visible* or *Apparent* Externity of an Object, is no Argument of its *real* Externity; and consequently (if it be not the same Thing again in other Words) that there is a true and real Difference between the *Quasi* and any *Real* Externity of an Object; which justifies the *Distinction* laid down in my Introduction.

This Conclusion follows, with the same Force or Evidence, from the *Possible* as from the *Actual* Instances; and as much from *One* of either Sort, as from *Ten Thousand*. For if but *One*, and that a possible Instance,

Instance, be given and allowed of, wherein an Object may be seen, with all the *visible Marks* of being External, which attend any Visible or Seen Object whatsoever, but which yet *is not indeed* External; this one intirely destroys all Connexion between *Apparent* and *Real* Externity; and so the Consequence will be, that an Object's *Appearing* to be External, is no manner of Argument that it is *really* so.

Yet I have instanced in *many* Things, for my *Reader's* Sake, as well as my *own*. For my *own* indeed, in the first Place, in as much as by this Means I have many Strings to my Bow, which must every one be broken before the Bow itself can be bent the other Way. But yet not forgetting my *Reader's* Benefit, (if he will allow it to be any) inasmuch as, amongst so many Instances, he may meet with one at least which will hit in with his *Way* of Reasoning, and so dispose him to read what follows with the more Pleasure.

SECT.

S E C T. II.

*That a Visible Object, as such, is
Not External.*

HAVING shewn that there is no Consequence from the *Visible* or *Quasi* Externity of an Object to any Real Externity of it, I come in the *next* Place to shew, that a Visible World is not, cannot be *External*.

But before I enter upon this Task, what shou'd hinder me from asserting my Privilege of standing still in this Place, and demanding to have some *other* Argument produced for the Externity of the Visible World, *besides* that of its *seeming* Externity? *This* is that which convinces People of every Age, and Sex, and Degree, that the Objects they behold are really External; and *this* I am sure, with far the greater Part, is the *only* Reason which induces this Persuasion. With such, and even with All, 'till some other Argument be produced, I may be allowed to argue, as if *this* were the only Argument: That is, to conclude outright, that no Visible Object is indeed External. For to remove all the Pillars on which a Building stands, is usually
thought

thought to be as effectual a Way to demolish it, as any direct Force or Violence.

But not to insist on every Point of Property, when so large a Field is before me, I will here immediately enter upon the Work of proving it to my Reader, according to my Promise. And here,

1. *First* of all, Let him try once more the Experiment already mentioned, of pressing or distorting his Eye with his Finger. In this Case I observed before, (with an Appeal for the Truth of it, to common Experience,) that *Two* like Objects *appear*, or are *seen*. Hence I concluded, that only *one* of these can be External; that is, that *one* of them is *not so*. But *here* I argue from the same Fact, that *neither* of them is External.

Let an Instance be put, as suppose the Object which we call *the Moon*, by pressing my Eye I see *Two* Moons, equally Vivid, equally External; if so, they are *both* External, or *neither*. But we are agreed already that they are not *both so*, therefore *neither* of them is External.

If any one will affirm, that only one of these Moons is External, I must desire him to give me one *Mark* or *Sign* of the Externity of one, which is not in the other. In the mean Time let him try this Experiment with himself.

In

In the Act of seeing Two Moons, let him call one of them the true *External* Moon, and the other only an appearing or false, or by any other Name which he shall please to give it: This done, let him (with his Eyes or Mind still intent upon these Objects) *remove* his Finger, and press the other Eye in like Manner; or *but* either one of his Eyes, still keeping the other intent on the same Object, and he will find by manifest Experience, that the Moon, which he calls *the true*, will prove to be *the false*, and that which he calls the false, will prove to be the true. This, I think, is plain and palpable Demonstration, that they are both *Equally true*, or (as we here understand the Word) both *equally External*. Since therefore no more than *one* can be pretended to be External, to say that they are *both equally so*, is the same as to say that they are *neither of them so*.

Note 1. That the same Argument here proceeding on the Instance of the Moon, is the very same with relation to any other Visible Object. So that the Conclusion comprehends the whole Visible World at once; or, in other Words, *every Visible Object*, considered as Visible or Seen.

Note 2. The same Conclusion likewise follows from every one of the Instances mentioned in the former Section. Since, as on one Hand it appears that there is no
Conse-

Consequence from the *Apparent* to any *Real* Externity of an Object ; so in the very Act of supposing certain Objects, which are as much *apparently* External as any Objects whatsoever, but which *indeed* are not External, we must of Course suppose them to be as *much indeed* External as any Objects whatsoever. Since therefore *some* are not External, we must conclude that *none* are so. And this Conclusion will and must hold good till some *Mark* or *Sign* be given of the Externity of *One* Object, which is not also in the other ; the very Attempt of which is contrary to the Supposition. But to proceed.

III. 'Tis a Maxim in Philosophy that *Like is not the same*, and therefore much more one would think should it be allow'd that Things *vastly different* are not the *same*. As for Instance, that *Light* is not *Darkness*, nor *Darkness* *Light* ; that *Greater* is not *Less*, nor *Less* *Greater*, &c. And yet on such plain and simple Principles as these it follows that the Visible World is not External.

Here then let us again single out an Object which will answer for the whole Visible World, and let it be the same as before, viz. the *Moon*. The *Question* is, *Whether the Moon which I see is External or not ?* In this Question there is not a Word but what

what is plain and simple, or which has been explain'd already: Let us then proceed to the *Trial* of it by the plain Rule before-mentioned, viz. That *Things different are not the same*, which indeed is the same Thing in other Words with the First Principle of Science, viz. *Impossibile est idem esse & non esse*.

I. First then I am content for a while to grant that there is an *External World*, and in this World an *External Moon* in a Place far distant from us, which we call the *Heavens*. Still the Question returns, whether the Moon which I see be that *External Moon* here suppos'd to be in the *Heavens*. Well now, the Moon which I see is a *Luminous* or *Bright Object*. But is the Moon suppos'd to be in the *Heavens* a *Luminous Thing* or *Body*? No; but a *Dark* or *Opacous Body*, if there is any Truth in the unanimous Assent of all Philosophers. Again, the Moon which I see is a *plain Surface*; but is the Moon in the *Heavens* a *plain Surface*? No; all the World agree that the Moon in the *Heavens* is *Rotund* or *Spherical*. Again, the Moon which I see is *Semicircular* or *Cornuted*; but is this the Figure of the Moon suppos'd to be in the *Heavens*? No; we all affirm, that the Moon in the *Heavens* is *Round* or *Circular*. Again Lastly, The Moon which I see is a little

little Figure of Light, no bigger than a Trencher, nay *so little*, as to be intirely coverable by a Shilling. But is this a just Description of the Moon supposed to be in the Heavens? No, the Moon in the Heavens is by all allowed to be a Body of a *prodigious Size*, of some Thousands of Miles in its Diameter. Well then, what follows from all this, but that the Moon in the Heavens is not the Moon which I see; or, that the Moon which I see is not in the Heavens, or External to my Perceptive or Visive Faculty?

2. *Secondly*, As we have seen that the Moon which I see, is not the same with any Moon supposed to be in the Heavens, and consequently, that the Moon which I see is not External, by a Comparison of the Visible or Seen Moon, with *that* which is supposed to be *External*; so, the same Thing will appear by a Comparison of Visible Things with *Visible*, or, of the same Thing, (as I must here speak, for want of more proper Words,) with itself. But to explain.

At *this Instant* I see a *Little Strip* of Light, which common Use has taught me to call *the Moon*. Now again I see a *Larger*, which is still called by the *same Name*. At *this Instant* I see a *Semicircle*; a *while after* I see a *Circle* of Light, and *both* these are called the Moon. Again, *now* I see a *Circle* of Light

Light of *such* or *such* a Magnitude; *a while* after I see a Circle of Light of a much *Greater* Magnitude; and both these, as before, I am taught to call *the* Moon. But really and truly, instead of *one*, I see *many* Moons, unless Things different are the same. How then can I believe that the Moons which I see are either *one* or *all* of them External? That they are *All* so cannot be pretended, for no one ever dreamt of more than *one* External Moon; and I am as confident on the other Hand, that no one will pretend that *either* *One* of them is External, as in Exclusion of the rest. I conclude then that they are *all alike* External, that is, that neither of them is *so*; and consequently, (there being nothing in this but what is equally true of every other Object of the Visible World,) that no Visible Object is, or can be, External.

III. But why such long Fetches to prove a simple Truth? 'Tis no Wonder that my Reader (who perhaps has never thought of this Subject before) should overlook the exact Point of the Question, when I myself can scarce keep it in View. I wou'd beg Leave therefore to remind myself and him, that the Question in Hand does not any way proceed, or so much as need the Mention of anybodies supposed to be External, and *unknown* to us; but the Question is,

whether the *Extentions*, *Figures*, *Bodies*,
(or whatever else you'll call them,) which
I see quasi without me, be indeed without
me or not.

But can the Resolution of any Case be
more Plain and Simple than of this? For
is there any other possible Way of *seeing* a
Thing than by having such or such a Thing
present to our Minds? And can an Object
be *present* to the Mind, or Visive Faculty,
which is affirmed to be *External* to it?
Then may we think, without thinking on
any Thing; or perceive, without having
any Thing in our Mind. If then the *Present-ness*
of the Object be *necessary* to the
Act of Vision, the Object perceived cannot
possibly be *External* to, at a *Distance* from,
or *Independent* on, us; And consequently,
the only Sense in which an Object can be
said to Exist *without* us, is its being *not Seen*
or *perceived*. But the Objects we speak of
are supposed to be *Seen*, and therefore are
not *External* to us, which is the Point to
be demonstrated.

To this I might add another, which (if
possible) is a yet more simple Manner of
proceeding to the same Conclusion. And it
is this. The Objects we speak about are
supposed to be *Visible*; and that they are
Visible or *Seen*, is supposed to be *All* that
we know of them, or their Existence. If
so,

so, they Exist as Visible, or in other Words, their Visibility is their Existence. This therefore destroys all, or any Distinction between their *Being*, and their being *Seen*, by making them both the same Thing; and this evidently at the same Time destroys the Externity of them. But this Argument has the Misfortune of being too simple and evident, for the Generality of Readers, who are apt to fancy that Light itself is not seen, but by the help of Darkness; and so, without insisting any farther on this Head, I proceed to some other Points which may *seem* to be more Intelligible.]

IV. Surely, cou'd the most extravagant Imagination of Man have conceived a Way, how an Object *supposed to be External*, cou'd ever possibly become *Visible*, Philosophers wou'd never have been at so great an Expence of Fruitless Meditation, as to forge the strange Doctrine of the *Active* and *Passive* Intellect, *Impressed* and *Expressed* Species, &c. whereby to account for our Manner of seeing Objects. This Doctrine, as I remember, is as followeth.

It is supposed, that when a Man stands opposite to an Object, there are certain *Scales* or *Images*, (which proceed from this Object representing it) which fly in at the Eye, where they meet with a certain *Be-*

ing, *Faculty*, or *Power*, called the *Active Intellect*, which, in an Instant, Spiritualizes them into *Ideas*, and thence delivers them to the *inmost Recept* of the Soul, called the *Passive Intellect*, which *perceives* or *sees* them.

Now far be it from me to move the least Objection against this Account of Vision. They are doubtless all plain and simple Ideas, or else *Aristotle* had not chosen, neither had the Tribe of Philosophers since patronized, them.

I only observe *First*, that this Antient, and almost Universal, Account of Vision, supposes that the *Object seen* is this supposed *Scale* or *Effluvium*. And consequently, *Secondly*, that in order to the *Act* of Vision, there is, and must be, *an Intimate Union* between *Faculty* and *Object*.

For if the Soul can see an *Object* which is not *present* with it, there had been no need of *Images* of the *Object* to become present to the Soul, by passing thro' the Eye, &c. However, they need not be *Images*, but any *other Fashioned Particles* would have done as well, if the *Objects* seen were not those very *Images* thus Spiritualized in the *Active*, and thence passing on to the *Passive, Intellect*.

Why then shou'd not I conclude, even with Universal Consent, that the *Objects*
seen

seen are not External, but intimately Present with, or Existent in, the Soul?

Those who Patronize this Hypothesis of Vision, will, doubtless, tell me, that it is the least of their Thoughts thereby to affirm and conclude, that the Visible World is not External. On the contrary, that the Hypothesis itself supposes an External World, or Outward Objects, from whence these Images or Effluvia proceed.

I Answer, it does so; but it does not say or suppose, that these External Objects are *Visible* or *Seen*, but only that they *Are* or *Exist* Externally. On the contrary, the Objects seen are supposed to be these *Images*, which, in order to be seen, must first *cease to be External*; that is, must pass into the Soul, and become *Ideally present* with it. So that this Account of Vision supposes the *Visible* World, as such, to be not External.

If, together with this, Men will yet hold or affirm that the *Visible* World is External, I can only shew them that their own Account supposes the *direct contrary*. But it is neither in mine, nor any other Person's, Power to hinder another from holding Contradictions.

V. From the *Old* I proceed to the Hypothesis of Vision, which is a Part of the *New* Philosophy. Every one, I suppose, has

heard of the Doctrine of *seeing the Divine Ideas*, or (as Mr. *Malebranche* expresses it) *seeing all Things in God*. By this every Mode of Pure or *Intellective Perception* is accounted for; but I am here concerned only with *that* which is distinguished by the Name of *Vision*. With Regard to this the *Hypothesis* is as followeth.

In every Act of Vision they distinguish Two Things, *viz.* *Sensation* and *Idea*, in other Words *Colour* and *Figure*. *Colour*, they say, is nothing different from the Soul which seeth it, it being only a *Modification* of Thought or Mind. And as for *Figure*, *viz.* this or that particular Figure which is seen, they call it part of that *Intelligible Extension* which God includes, or contemplates, *thus* and *thus* exhibited to our Minds.

Now I say, nothing is more evident than that this Account of Vision supposes *External Matter* is not *Visible*; and consequently, that *Visible Matter* is not *External*. So evident, that I depend even on my *Aristotelian* Reader, (who neither approves, nor so much as understands, what these new Philosophers mean,) that he will perceive at first Sight that *this* must needs be meant by it.

However, when I am apprized of any one who doubts of it, I shall not only be ready

ready to argue this Matter fairly with him, but will also undertake to produce several exprefs Passages from the Writers of this Sort, which directly affirm and contend, that External Matter is not, cannot, become Visible.

Nevertheless, I am sensible of the Opposition which may be made to this Assertion, from several other Passages taken from the same Writers. But I cannot help it if Men will speak inconsistently with themselves; or explain their Meaning so by Halves, as that the same Thing shall appear to be both *affirmed* and *denied* by them.

But the Truth is, I fear but little Opposition as to this Point: Since no one will have Zeal enough to undertake it, but those who professedly Patronize this new Philosophy: And I have so good an Opinion of these, as to believe that they will rather take the Hint, and agree with me, upon due Reflection, than set themselves to oppose, from any partial Regard to their own preconceived Opinions.

VI. I shall therefore *once more* endeavour to persuade my *Aristotelian* Reader, that it is according to the Principles of his *own* Philosophy, to Assert, that Visible Matter is not External.

For this I wou'd refer him to what he will find in the first Book of Philosophy, he shall

shall happen to Light on, which has any Thing on the *General* Subject of Matter. For Instance, let him consult *Suarez*, *Scheibler*, or *Baronius*, on this Subject, which will be found in their Books of *Metaphysics*; which Authors I mention more particularly, because with these I myself have been most acquainted; not but that I dare appeal to the first Philosopher on this Subject which my Reader shall happen to lay his Hands on: But to the Point.

I do not here affirm, that any one Philosopher of this Sort has ever once asserted, that Visible Matter is not External, or so much as ever moved the Question, whether it be so or not: On the contrary, I verily believe, that if the Question had been put to every Individual of them, they wou'd unanimously have affirmed that it is certainly External. Nevertheless I still appeal to my Impartial Reader, whether the *Questions* which they move, and the *Resolutions* which they agree in, concerning the Thing which they call *Matter*, do not plainly suppose that they are speaking of an Object which they *do not See*, and which is utterly *Invisible*.

As for *Instance*, 'Tis usual for them to enquire whether *Matter Exists* or not. *Whether* it has an *Actus Entitativus*; or
whether

whether it be only *Pura Potentia*. How it is capable of being *Known*, &c.

As to the *First* of these Questions they use to resolve it thus. That Matter must needs Exist, because it is supposed to be Created, and also because it is supposed to be Part of a *Compositum*. And here again they will tell you, that if it were altogether nothing, it cou'd do nothing in Nature; it cou'd not be the Subject of Generation and Corruption; it cou'd not be true, that all Things in their Corruption are reduced to Matter; and besides, if Matter was nothing, there wou'd be a continual Creation and Annihilation, which is absurd, &c.

As to the *Second* Question, viz. whether it be *Pura Potentia*, or not, they distinguish of a Twofold *Actus*; *Actus Physicus*, and *Actus Metaphysicus*. *Secundum actum Physicum*, they say, Matter is allowed to be *Pura Potentia*, but not *secundum Actum Metaphysicum*, &c.

And then *Lastly*, as to the other Question, viz. *quomodo Materia possit Cognosci*, they resolve it thus. That God and Angels are supposed to know it *per propriam Speciem*; but we are supposed to know it only by *Consequence*, or, as they say, *per proportionem seu Analogiam ad materiam rerum Artificialium*, &c. whence Plato is quoted
by

by them, as saying, that Matter is knowable only *Adulterina Cognitione*.

Now I say, for *what* are all these, and several other such like Fetches which I cou'd name, if the *Matter* they inquire about be that which is *Visible* or *Seen*? Can it be doubted whether that *Exists* or not which is supposed to be *Seen*? Whether such an Object as this be *Actus Entitativus*, or *Pura Potentia*? And whether we *know* any Thing of the *Existence* of an Object which we are *supposed to see*?

If *Visible* Matter were the Matter they are debating about, can it possibly be accounted for, that not the least Mention is ever made of our seeing it? Or, that for its *Existence*, &c. they shou'd never think of referring us to our Senses? And yet I desire another to shew me but one Word of this Sort in any Philosophic Disputation on this Subject.

Nay, they plainly tell us, that the Matter they speak about is not by us seen, but is directly knowable only by God and Angels.

If then the Inquiry they make about Matter be not about any Matter supposed to be *seen* by us, yet nothing is more evident, than that the Matter they speak about is supposed to be *External*. So that what shou'd hinder us from concluding, that it is
the

the unanimous Opinion of these Philosophers, (tho' indeed they have never in express Words affirmed it,) that *External Matter* is, at least to us, *Invisible*; and consequently, that *Visible* or *Seen Matter* is not *External*; which is all that I am here concerned for, leaving others to explain for them what they mean when they affirm, that *External Matter* is *Visible* to *God* and *Angels*.

C H A P. II.

Objections Answer'd.

HAVING prov'd my Point after my own Manner, it may be expected that I now attend to what another may offer on the contrary Part. This, I confess, is a piece of Justice which I owe a fair Adversary, and accordingly I here profess I will be ready at any Time, either to answer his Objections, or submit to the Force of them. But how can it be expected that I myself should oppose any Thing to the Point I have been contending for? For my Reader may remember, that I have already declar'd, that I know of no one Reason or Argument, either

either in myself formerly, or from others, for the Externeity of the Visible World, besides its *seeming* Externeity. But if I have not already shewn the Inconsequence of this Argument, I confess I have been very idly employ'd; and if I have, I have at once answer'd every Objection that can reasonably be expected from me, to be urg'd against the Point I am concern'd for.

There may be *Cavils* indeed enough, and of these I expect my Share from a certain Quarter; for having endeavour'd, with a serious Air, to demonstrate a Proposition which is so contrary to common Prejudice, and which some perhaps will be resolv'd not to admit; nay, I myself am not so abstracted from my former self, as not to be able very easily to invent a Set of Arguments of this Sort. But what can in Reason be expected that I should do with an Adversary of this Sort? Shall I study a Means to *convert* those whom confessedly it is not in my Power to *convince*? But I have said already that I know of no Mechanical Engine proper to remove Prejudices; and I must still profess the same, till this awaken'd Age shall bless the World with the Discovery. Shall I then altogether pretermitt the Mention of such Objections, affecting to despise them, as not worth the Labour of answering them? This indeed I would

would do if I wrote on the Side of a prevailing Party ; but a whole World against one is too considerable an Adversary to be despis'd, tho' they were not only in the Wrong, but were little better than Idiots. But I have Reason to expect, that not only such, but even the Wise and Learned, at least by far the greater Part, will be my Adversaries in this Point, after all the Endeavour which I have us'd to justify it ; and therefore, till I am appriz'd of some other, I must suppose them to be so, in Virtue of such Objections as I can think of at present, or have by Accident heard from others in Conversation, which are these that follow.

Objection I.

First, I expect to be told, that in arguing against the Extraexistence of the Visible World, I oppose a known Evidence of Truth, viz. the universal Consent of Mankind, that it is External.

Answer.

This now is one of the Things which I just now call'd *Cavils*, which I think is the best Name that an Argument deserves, which is nothing at all to the Purpose in that wherein it is true ; at least such a one as is false, both in Principle and Consequence,

quence, which will, I suppose appear to be the Case of the present Objection. For,

First, as to the Fact or Minor Part of the Argument, what should hinder me from denying it? For, *First*, who can assure me that since the World began, not One or Two, or Two Hundred Persons, have not been of that Opinion which I am here concern'd for? How many may have written on this Subject in former Times, and we not hear of it in the Present? And how many more may have liv'd and died of this Opinion, and yet have never written on it? But, *Secondly*, what if we allow that not one has ever written on this Subject before? This will but turn to the Disadvantage of the Objection. For where then is the universal *Consent* before spoken of? Do we mean the same by it as universal *Silence*? Silence in this Case will amount to but a very slender Argument of Consent; and indeed so slender, that the bare *Opinion* or *Affirmation* of any *one* Person to the contrary, who has professedly consider'd and inquired about the Matter, will outweigh a *Silence* ever so universal, and may even justly challenge the Evidence of Consent, be it more or less, on his Side of the Question.

If therefore the Question about the *Externality* of the Visible World, has never, before

fore this Time, been professedly consider'd, I may fairly plead universal Consent for that Part which I defend; since the Consent of *all* that have ever consider'd it, must needs be all that is meant by *Universal* Consent. If therefore there be found on the contrary Part, any Thing in Mankind which is like Consent, it must lose its Name, and be called *Prejudice* or *Inclination*; which is an Adversary (as I have observed before) I have no Arms to contend with. But *Lastly*, methinks it shou'd weigh something towards Consent on my Side, that I have shewn already that it is consistent with, and even necessary to the Principles of Philosophers of all Sides, to hold that which I contend for. And if this be true, the utmost that can be said in answer to it will be this only, that they have contradicted *themselves*, which I am as ready to admit of, as any one can be to urge, since this will make the *Authority* of Ten Thousand of no Value against the Point I am concerned for. But,

Secondly, What if it were true, or admitted, that Universal Consent lay opposite to my Conclusion? Must it therefore be condemned without Trial, or hearing of any Thing in its Defence? If not, then it is allowed to be possible, that a Proposition may be true, tho' it happen to cross the

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Consent

Consent of all Mankind. And if so, how can the contrary be true too, namely, that a Proposition is therefore false, because contrary to Consent? But now, if a Proposition may be true, which is against Universal Consent, I immediately affirm that this is the Case of the Proposition I am contending for. Well, and how shall this be tried? How, I say, but by *Reason* and *Disputation*? So that unless Universal Consent be held to be an Argument *Universally* conclusive, it concludes nothing at all, (there being a *contradictory Distance* between these Two Propositions, *viz. a Thing may be true which is contrary to Consent, and a Thing can may not be true which is contrary to Consent.*) And therefore the Mention of Consent is here altogether needless, at least, its Introduction serves only to convince us, that it is much better it had not been introduced. But

Some perhaps will hold this Argument to be *Universally Conclusive, viz. A Proposition may not be true which is contrary to Universal Consent*; and this, I suppose, must be the Meaning of those who will pretend to mean any Thing by the Words of the *Objection*. But is there a Man upon Earth who will join Issue with me on this Foot? Perhaps so, but he must excuse me if I declare beforehand that I will not do so with him

him whilst he continues to be of this Opinion. And I am Fool enough to say this, because I think I have *Reason* for it. But *this alone* unqualifies me to hold Discourse with one who will contend, that Universal Consent is a simple Evidence of Truth. Whereas if this be true, then *Universal Consent is Truth*, and *Reason*, or the common Standard of every *particular* Truth. Consequently, by this Rule, a Proposition may become *true* which is simply *false*, or *false* which is simply *true*; that is, all that which I have been used to call *Truth* and *Reason* is destroyed at once. But now, whatsoever Proposition I defend or deny, I must take it for granted that there is such a Thing as *Truth*, *Independent* and *Immutable*, and that *Reason is Reason*, tho' ever so many People dissent from me, or deny it; that is, I must take the *Question* between us for granted, as my first Step towards the Disputation of it. And therefore, as on *one* Hand I can do no otherwise than thus, and on the *other* I am sure no *Adversary* will allow me to take this Method with him, we must e'en part fairly, as being unqualified for each other's Conversation. And this is my *best Answer* to the *First Objection*.

Objection II.

Does not the Sense of *Feeling* assure us of the Extraexistence of the Visible World? To this I

Answer.

First. If for Instructions Sake only you propose this Question, you are doubtless dispos'd to take my Word for an Answer; accordingly I answer, No; the Sense of *Feeling* does not assure us of the Extraexistence of the Visible World. If this does not satisfy, you are desired, instead of *Questions*, to give me an *Argument*, whereby it may appear that the Sense of *Feeling* does assure us of the Extraexistence of the Visible World. What makes this the more necessary is, because I have proved already in great Variety that the Visible World is not External; and amongst the rest, that the Sense of Vision gives us Evident Assurance, that a Visible Object, as such, is not, cannot be, External. And methinks, if this is not false, it should be true; or if false, yet should not be so called, till either the Arguments are answered by which it is defended, or some other Argument be produced, which concludes *against*

gainst the Truth of it : For till one of these Things be done I have but the Objector's bare *Affertion* against me, whereas he has mine, and I think something else on the other Side. But,

Secondly, I am content to go on with the Labouring Oar in my Hand, and shew the contrary to that which is affirmed in the Objection. Accordingly I affirm,

First, That be the *Object* of the Sense of *Feeling* what it will, or leaving the Decision of this Matter at large, *Feeling* is no Argument of the *Extraexistence* of this Object. For the Truth of this I will only refer my Reader back to what has been already observed on this Subject ; or rather I presume that he remembers both *that*, and *how* I have prevented the Force of this Part of the Objection ; so that till I hear farther on this Point I may save myself the Pains of adding any Thing in this Place. But I affirm also,

Secondly, That the Sense of Feeling is so far from assuring us of the *Extraexistence* of the Visible World, that it does not so much as say any Thing of its *Existence simple*. I say not here with a certain * Author, that *we cannot feel Existence*, it being the same Thing to do so as to *feel a*
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Propo-

* Mr. Norrijs's Theory of Ideal World. Vol. 1. p. 198. § 13.

Proposition. This may be good Argument for ought I know, but I profess it is too high or too low for me, for I do not understand it. But what I affirm is this, that whatever be the Object of the Sense of *Feeling*, and even admitting that it assures us of the Existence of its proper Object; Things Visible are not the Object of this Sense; and consequently we can have no Assurance *this Way* of so much as the *Existence simple* of such Objects. I know not how it may sound to another, but to me to say, *I can feel a Visible Object*, is just such another Piece of Sense as to say, *I can see the Sound of a Trumpet*, or *hear the Colours of the Rainbow*. One would think it should be granted me that a Visible Object is *Visible*, and that a Tangible Object is *Tangible*, and that *Seeing* and *Feeling* are *Two different Things* or *Sensations*; but 'tis the same Thing to me tho' they were one and the same; for if so, then as Vision is Feeling, so Feeling is Vision; and then I have proved already that a Visible Object, as such, is not External, whereas if they are different they must have different Objects, be the Names of them what they will; and then a Visible Object will be *one* Thing, and a Tangible Object *another*: And therefore, how the Existence of a *Tangible Object* should become an Argument for the Existence

Existence (much more the Extraexistence) of a *Visible* Object, is indeed past my Skill to understand, any farther than this, that if I understand any Thing at all, I understand, and I think have shewn, this to be a plain and glaring *Contradiction*. And so I proceed to

Objection III.

Which is *Mr. Des Cartes's* ; and that according to the best of my Remembrance is this : He concludes the Being of an External World from the *Truth* and *Goodness* of *God*, who is not to be supposed to deceive us in our Involuntary Judgments or Inclinations. [This, I say, I take to be his Meaning, tho' my Manner of expressing it be very different from that of his Two great Followers **Mr. Malebranche* and †*Mr. Norris*, for which I refer my Reader to the Places cited at the Bottom. Whether I have done him Justice, or not, I leave to be disputed by those who think I have not. In the mean time, the Reason which I give for differing from these Great Persons is, because as they have represented his Argument, it seems to be inconsistent with

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itself,

* *Search Illustrations. pag. 11.*
World. Vol. 1. p. 208.

† *Theory of the Id.*

itself, and has not so much as the *Appearance* of being an Objection; whereas, as I have here given it, it seems to have some Appearance, tho' how far it is from being a real Argument against any Thing I am concerned for, will appear by this that followeth.]

Answer.

I. If by the Being of an External World, be meant the Being of a World, which, as External, is suppos'd to be invisible, this is nothing to my present Purpose, but belongs wholly to my *Second Part*; wherein I shall attempt to shew that an External World is simply an Impossibility, which External World will be also there supposed to be invisible. But if by the Being of an External World be meant the same as the *External Being*, or (as I have hitherto called it) the Extraexistence or Externeity of the *Visible* or *Sensible* World, it is then indeed an Objection against the Point I am now upon. Accordingly,

2. I say, that in my Opinion it is no Imputation on the Truth and Goodness of God to affirm, much less to attempt to prove, that the Visible World is not External. 'Tis no Business of mine to prove this Negative, tho' it be the easiest Thing

in the World so to do. Let them prove the contrary who build their whole Cause of an External World upon the Force of it. It is enough for me that I have shewn by many Arguments that the Visible World is not External. These Arguments either conclude, or they do not; if not, let this be made appear by a Just and Distinct Answer to them; but if they do, the Point is gain'd, and they must be Persons strangely disposed, who after this will expect I should take their Word, when they say, that the Truth or Goodness of God is concerned, that *that* should be *False*, which is and must be *supposed* to be True. But to be something more particular, I answer,

First, That I deny the *Supposition* of the *Involuntariness* of our Judgments for the Externeity of the Visible World. For this it is enough that I myself am One, who am so far from being Involuntarily determined to this Assent, that I can, and have already demonstrated that it is not External.

Secondly, We should come to a fine Pass of Reasoning indeed, if this Manner of Proceeding were allowed to be good, *viz.* *I am inclined to judge such or such a Thing to be so or so; ergo, It is as I would have it, because God will not deceive me.* It is in vain in this Case to appeal to Reason and Argument

Argument ; nay, tho' God himself should supply us with Reason against our Inclination, nay, and give us his Word that our Inclination is Erroneous, yet still we are bound to stand by it, and even plead the Authority of God against himself. But, *Lastly*, Do I hear this from a *Cartesian*, even from *Des Cartes* himself, who is for nothing more known in the World than for giving us many Instances wherein a Common Inclination may be, and is Erroneous ; as in judging *Light* to be in the *Sun*, *Heat* in the *Fire*, or in the *Hand*, *Colours* on *External Objects*, &c. In all these Cases we are as much *inclined* as in judging the *Visible World* to be *External* ; and yet it is enough with him and his Followers for the Confutation of these Inclinations, that they have good *Reason* to the contrary : And this methinks should be enough in any Case, and with any Persons, unless we are resolved to be unreasonable, and even profess ourselves *Sceptics*, and if so, I confess I am silenced.

PART

PART II.

*That there is no External World, and,
That an External World is a Being
utterly Impossible.*

INTRODUCTION.

HAVING shewn in my former Part that the *Visible* World is not External, I come now to the other Thing proposed in the Beginning, namely to demonstrate more at large, or simply, that an External World is a Being utterly impossible, or that there is no such World. Now to this, as before, I shall proceed by Steps.

CHAP. I.

ARGUMENT I.

AND here I affirm in the *First* Place, that (abstracting from any Argument directly proving this Point) we are bound *already* so far to conclude that there is no *External World*, as that it is against all the Laws of fair Reason and Argument to suppose or make mention of any such World.

For

For if a Visible World, as such, is not External, an External World, as such, must be utterly Invisible, and if Invisible, Unknowable, unless by Revelation.

For, *First*, an External World (if there be any such Thing) is, I suppose, allowed by all to be a *Creature*; but the Being of a Creature is not to be prov'd by *Reason*, for Reason converses only in Things *Necessary* or *Eternal*, whereas a Creature, as such is *Contingent*, and *Temporary*; so that in vain shall we seek to Reason to assure us of the Existence of an External World.

Then, *Secondly*, 'tis here supposed that we should seek to as little Purpose to the Testimony of *Sense*, since an External World, as such, is here supposed to be absolutely Invisible. Whether we have any Notice from *Revelation* of the Being of any such World shall be considered in its proper Place. In the mean Time I here suppose also, *Thirdly*, that we have no such Notice, so that, as the Case stands at present, an External World is a Being utterly *Unknown*.

But now I have always received it as a Law, that we ought never to reason but upon *Known Ideas*; and if this be Just and Reasonable, an External World, as being *Unknown*, ought to have as little Place in our

our Reasonings as if we knew for certain that there was no such World.

Nay, on the Supposition of its being unknown, we are not only bound to *omit* the Mention of it, but also warranted to *conclude* that there is no such World. This, I say, must be an allowed Consequence, till such Time as some other pretends the contrary; and he must *prove* too as well as pretend, else the Consequence stands good against him.

Here then is my Advantage; we all know and are agreed that there is such a Thing as a *Visible* World, and that a Visible Object, as such, is not External: On the other Hand, we are as much agreed, at least 'tis here supposed that we are agreed, that we know nothing at all of an *External* World, supposed, as such, to be Invisible: But it is a Maxim in Science, that *Eadem est Ratio non Entis & non Apparentis*. I conclude therefore outright that there is no such World.

'Tis for this Reason that we think it our Duty to Reason only on the Supposition of *Body and Spirit*, *thinking* and *extended* Beings, viz. because we have no Knowledge of the Existence of any Creature, which is neither of these. Hence we think it a very good and safe Way of arguing, to make the Exclusion of the one, the Consequence of the
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the Position of the other, and so *Vice Versa*. Thus Philosophers use to prove that *Colour, Light, Heat, Sound, &c.* belong to, or are Affections, of *Spirits*, because they are not included in the Idea which we have of *Body*. The Principle or Major Proposition of which Argument is plainly this. There are but Two Sorts of Beings in the World, viz. *Spirit* and *Matter*; then the Minor is this, viz. *Light, &c.* do not belong to *Matters*, ergo, they belong to *Spirit*. Now if this Way of arguing is good, it is so by Virtue of that Principle, that we ought to reason only on *known Idea's*, and that Things which appear not, are but equal to Things which are not; and 'tis in Vertue of the same that I here plead a Right to conclude that there is no such Thing as an External World.

I pretend not this to be Demonstration of the Points simply, as if I should say that a Thing being unknown were a direct Argument of its not being at all; but yet this is something so near of Kin to a Demonstration, and so every way serving all the Ends and Purposes of a Demonstration, that whoever has the Advantage of it on his Side, has as little to fear from an Adversary, as he that can produce Ten Thousand Demonstrations. For this is an evident Principle or Rule of Reasoning, that a Thing
unknown

unknown ought never to be suppos'd, and therefore till it be suppos'd, 'tis the very same Thing as to us as if there were no such Thing at all. To suppose the Being of a Thing granted to be unknown, with him who affirms that it is nothing at all, is to beg the Question; whereas, to suppose it to be nothing at all upon the same Concession, is not to beg the Question; I mean any fair or legal one, because on *one* Hand, no one has any Right to make that a Question which he professes that he knows nothing of; and on the *other*, every one has a Right not only to question the Existence, but also to suppose the Non-Existence of what is granted to be unknown. So that whilst this is granted, in the Case before us, I have the same Advantage against any one who shall suppose an External World, (*viz.* either in *Actu formali*, as in Opposition to what I here contend for, or in *Actu essentia*, in the Resolution of any Philosophical or General Question, which depends on the *Yea* or *Nay* of this Point,) as if I were girt about with ever so many Demonstrations.

I might therefore fairly rest here, and save myself the Labour of producing any *direct* or *ostensive* Arguments against the Being or Possibility of an External World: But to give my Reader the best Satisfaction

I can, and also to establish my Conclusion in some Measure answerably to the good Use and Moment of it, I am content to propose the following Demonstrations.

CH A P. II.

A R G U M E N T II.

AN *External* World is here supposed to be *Invisible*, even utterly or absolutely so, absolutely *incapable* of being an Object of Vision or Perception; insomuch, that tho' it were here supposed that an *External* World were capable of Existing, or that any *Power* were *sufficient* to produce such a Thing or Being, yet no Power can be supposed to be sufficient to make it *Visible* or *Seen*. For a *Visible* World, as such, is not *External*, as has been shew'd already: So that to say, that an *External* World may (by any Cause) become *Visible*, is a Contradiction in Terms.

Well now, an *External* World is supposed to be, or to imply, *Creature*; so that if there be any such Thing in Being, it is so because God has Willed, Made, or Created it.

But

But for what *End*, or *Use*, or *Purpose*, can we suppose that God shou'd create an *Invisible* World? A World, which, as *Invisible*, incapable of being inhabited, incapable of being known? For my Part I can think of no *Use* which such a World can be of. And considering that such a World is here granted to be unknown, it is not incumbent on me to shew that it can be of no *Use*, but on them to shew the contrary, who are concerned for the Being of it. So that till this be done I have a Right to suppose that it is of no *Use* at all, and consequently to affirm that there is no such World.

For tho' the *Principle* must take its Chance to be either admitted or denied, as Men shall please to judge, (only that, as I observed just now, he must prove his Point, who will venture on the Denial of it,) still the *Consequence* is good, and must pass with all for Demonstration, viz. that a Creature which is not, cannot be of any *Use*, is at best but a Possibility, but such a Possibility as neither *will* nor *can* be produced into Act.

This, with certain Wits, may appear to be a Contradiction; and perhaps I shou'd mend the Matter but little by the Answer I am most inclined to make them, *namely*, that tho' it be so, yet it is nevertheless true;

may, that I cou'd easily shew them a Hundred such Contradictions, which yet they themselves will acknowledge to be true. But I am content so far to favour the Iniquity of Words, as to explain by a *Distinction* this appearing Difficulty.

I say then, that Things are possible or impossible, after a *Twofold* Manner. One is, when in the *Idea* or *Conception* of the *Thing* there is, or is not, any Repugnancy or Contradiction.

This is what may be called an *Internal* or *Intrinsic* Possibility, or Impossibility; *Possibility* where there is not, *Impossibility* when there is, this supposed Repugnancy.

The *other* is, when the Repugnancy or Impediment is, or is not, (not in the *Thing* itself, but) in the *Cause*, or *Time*, or some other Circumstance or Affection of the *Thing*. But in this Place I am concerned only with the first of these, *viz.* the *Cause*.

A Thing is *possible* in its *Cause*, when there is, in the *Idea* of its *Cause*, no Impediment to be found, forbidding its Existence, or which is the same, withholding the Efficient from producing it into Act; and when the contrary to this happens, then the *Thing* is impossible. For since every *Thing* Exists by its *Cause*, it will as certainly not Exist if the *Cause* does not produce it, as if in its own *Idea* it implied

a Contradiction. And if the suppos'd Impediment in the Cause be *invincible*, the Existence of the Thing suppos'd becomes *properly impossible*. This I would therefore call an *External* or *Extrinsick* Possibility or Impossibility. A Thing then may be both possible and impossible in these different Respects; that is, intrinsically possible, but extrinsically impossible; and therefore of such a Thing it may be said without any Contradiction, that tho' it be admitted to be possible, (*viz.* intrinsically,) yet it is such a Possibility, as neither will, nor *can*, be produced into Act, (*viz.* by Reason of an Impediment found in its Cause, which tho' an *Extrinsick*, is yet a *Real* Impossibility against the Being of it.)

But now this is the Case before us, *viz.* of an External or Invisible World. Admitting it to be possible with Regard to the Thing itself, that such a World should Exist; yet a useless Creature cannot possibly be made, when we regard its Cause, *viz.* God, who can do nothing to no Purpose, by reason of his *Wisdom*. Here then lyes the *Impediment* spoken of in the Cause, which makes it extrinsically, but yet really impossible, that there should be any such World. I say *really* so, because the Wisdom by which God acts is necessary and immutable; and therefore if it be simply

against the Order of Wisdom to do an useless Act, the Impediment against the doing of it is to the full as invincible, as if a Repugnancy were found in the Idea or Conception of the Thing itself, here suppos'd to be done, or not done; and consequently an useless Effect is a real Impossibility.

But I have often found upon Examination, that where an extrinsick Impossibility lyes against any Point, we need but search to the bottom of it, and we shall find an intrinsick Repugnancy in the Thing itself. And this I think I have seen to be the Case of an External World, as I suppose will appear from some of the following Chapters.

CHAP. III.

ARGUMENT III.

AS for Instance. An External World, whose Extention is absolute, that is, not relatively depending on any Faculty of Perception, has (in my Opinion) such a Repugnancy in its *Extention*, as actually destroys the Being of the Subject World. The

The Repugnancy is this, that it is, or must be, both Finite and Infinite.

Accordingly then I argue thus, That which is both Finite and Infinite in Extent, is absolutely Non-existent, or there is, or can be, no such World. Or thus, an Extent or Expansion, which is both Finite and Infinite, is neither Finite nor Infinite, that is, is no Expansion at all. But this is the Case of an External Expansion, *ergo*, there is, or can be, no such Expansion.

I know not what will pass with some Men for Argument, if both the *Matter* and *Manner* of this be not approv'd of. For *first*, what can well be more evident than both the *Premises*? That a Thing, in the same Respect, cannot be both Finite and Infinite; or that a Thing which in the *Idea* of it implies both Finite and Infinite, is an *Act* neither Finite nor Infinite; and that what is neither Finite nor Infinite, is not at all, are (with me, and I suppose with all Pretenders to Reason,) such prime Principles of Science, that I must needs depend that these will never be call'd in Question by any but profest *Sceptics*. Then as to the Minor, its Evidence is to me so glaring, and (in the little Conversation I have had in the learned World) so universally assented to, that I am rather inclin'd here also to make my Appeal for, than endeavour to shew the

Truth of it. This of the Extent of an External World, is that which is call'd *Opprobrium Philosophorum*, being a Point own'd by all to have an invincible Demonstration, both for and against it. Some indeed, by Way of Hypothesis, have held it to be *finitely*, and some to be *infinitely*, extended, according as either of these has best served the Ends of some other Points they have been concerned for. But I have never yet met with any one so hardy, as, in Defence of *one*, to have indeavoured to *Dissolve* or *Answer* the Arguments lying on the *other* Side of the Contradiction. For this Reason I need not here name either the one sort or the other, but conclude outright, even with Universal Consent, that an Expansion External is both (that is neither) Finite and Infinite. Then,

Secondly, As to the *Form* or *Manner* of this Argument, it has *First* evidently this to plead for itself, that there is nothing in its Conclusion but what is in the Premises; which shews it to be no Fallacy, but a Legal and Just Argument. And also this, *Secondly*, that it is exactly parallel with several Arguments which I cou'd name, allowed by all to be good, and even perfectly demonstrative.

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As for Instance, Suppose a Man shou'd advance the Notion of a *Triangular Square*. Or suppose, Two Persons contending about the Attributes of this strange Idea: One arguing from the Idea of *Triangle*, that it has but *Three* Angles; and the *other* contending that it must have *Four*, from the Idea of a *Square*; what cou'd any reasonable Stander-by conclude from this, but that the Thing they are disputing about is nothing at all, even an Impossibility or Contradiction? Nay, the Disputants themselves must needs close in with this Manner of arguing; and that on Two Accounts.

First, In that this Manner of arguing accommodates the Difference between them, and salves the Honour of both. For by this *both* appear to be in the Right in the precise Points they are contending for; and Wrong only in something which they are both equally concerned for, *viz.* the Supposition of the *Being* of a *Triangular Square*, which is the Thing supposed by Consent between them. But chiefly,

Secondly, In that the Person who argues in this Manner must be allowed to have the Law of Reason on his Side, and may compel them, on their own Principles, to assent to his Conclusion. This is done by granting to each Party his Point, *namely*, that a *Triangular Square* is both *Triangular*

gular and Square, or Quadrangular. This done, they have nothing to do but to Answer each other's Arguments, which 'tis here supposed they cannot do. By this therefore each grants the other to be in the Right. So that for a Stander-by to grant both to be in the Right, is, in this Case, a Demonstration that they are both in the Wrong; or, in other Words, that the Thing they are disputing about is Nothing at all.

I have mentioned this *Possible*, rather than any *Actual*, Instance of this Kind, because I wou'd give an Instance wherein I may be sure to have every one of my Side. For certainly no one can doubt whether *this* be good Argument or not.

A Figure which is both Triangular and Quadrangular, is not at all.

But this is the Case of a Triangular Square.

Ergo, there is no such Figure.

The Force of this Argument has never been disputed, and I dare say never will; Whereas to have put a Case, which has been actually a Matter of Dispute, (of which Sort I believe some might be named,) tho' equally *conclusive*, had yet been less *plain* and *evident*, because what has been, may be again; and so to some I had seemed to prove a *Notum* by an *Ignotum*.

But

But now, in the present Case, which is granted to be clear, I have nothing to do but to shew it to be parallel with that which I before mentioned. And this is an easie Work. For (as in this *possible* one about the Attributes of a Triangular Square there may be, so) there has *actually* been a Dispute between Philosophers concerning one Attribute, *viz.* the Extent of an External World. *One* Side, from the Idea of its being *External*, has proved it to be *Infinite*; the *other*, from the Idea of its being Created, &c. has proved it to be *Finite*. *Both* suppose it to be *External*, *both* to be Created. At the same Time neither of them so much as pretends to *Answer* the Arguments on the Side opposite to his own; but only to justify his own Point directly. And yet both will grant, that if an External World be both *Finite* and *Infinite*, it is the same Thing as to say there is no such World.

Well then, here I interpose, as before, and say,

A World which is both *Finite* and *Infinite*, is not at all.

But this is the Case of an External World.

Ergo, there is no such World.

Here the Honour of both is saved; here both the Major and Minor are their own;
here

here a Stander-by has the same Advantage as before; so that what shou'd hinder an easie, and even universal, Assent to the Conclusion?

CHAP. IV.

ARGUMENT IV.

FROM the *Maximum*, I come next to the *Minimum Naturale*; or to the Question about the *Divisibility* of Matter, Quantity, or Extension.

And here I affirm in like Manner as before, that *External Matter* is both finitely and infinitely Divisible; and consequently, that there is no such Thing as *External Matter*.

The Argument in Form stands thus.

Matter which is both Finitely and Infinitely Divisible, is not at all.

But this is the Case of *External Matter*.

Ergo, There is no such Thing as *External Matter*.

The *Major* of this Argument is the first Principle of Science, it being the same in other Words, as to say, that what is, is, or that

that it is impossible for a Thing to be, and not be. For Finite and Infinite are just so to each other, as Being and not Being. *Finite* is to be limited, *Infinite* to be not limited. Or rather thus, Infinite is to be Absolute, Finite to be not Absolute. So that it is as plainly impossible for the same Thing to be both, as both to be, and not be, at the same Time, or in the same Respect, &c. For both the *Respect*, and *Time*, and every Thing else, which is or can be made the Condition of the Truth of this Principle, is also found in the Major of the present Argument; and consequently nothing can be more evident, than that what is, or in its Idea implies both Finite and Infinite, is not at all.

But now this I say is the Case or Implication of External Matter, which is the *Minor* or Assumption of the same Argument.

External Matter, as a Creature, is evidently Finite, and yet as External is as evidently Infinite, in the Number of its Parts or Divisibility of its Substance; and yet nothing can be more absurd than such an Infinite Divisibility.

But I need not deduce these Things to any farther Length, since no Philosopher that I have ever met with has ever doubted of this Matter, it being universally agreed that

that there is an Invincible Demonstration on both Sides of this Question of the Divisibility of Matter, so that I have nothing to do but to conclude that the Thing or Matter of which this Question proceeds is a mere Nothing, or Contradiction; yet I expect to be told, that it has been the least of the Thoughts of these Philosophers to conclude as I here do, since not one has ever doubted of the Existence of External Matter. To this I answer,

First, Perhaps so; but who can help this? Is it not enough for this Conclusion, that we are all agreed in the Premises, and that there is nothing in the Conclusion but what is in the Premises? If in this Case Men will hold the Premises, but deny the Conclusion, this, *at best*, can be no better than *Inadvertence*; but to do this, after the Conclusion is formally deduced, or the whole Syllogism is laid before them, is no better than errant *Scepticism*. And I must be excused if I contend not with an Adversary of this Sort. But, Secondly, One would think by the Descriptions which they themselves are used to give of External Matter, that all Philosophers should be very ready to subscribe to this Conclusion for its own Sake, as I have partly shewn already, and shall make appear more fully before I finish this Work.

Again,

Again, I expect to be told that the Matter which I here speak of is conceived to be very different from that concerning which Philosophers have disputed, in the Question about Divisibility of Extension, and also in that about the Extent of the World, (whether Infinite or Finite;) particularly, that the Matter or Extension which they speak of is supposed to be *Visible*, whereas that which I am speaking of is supposed to be *Invisible*. I answer,

Perhaps so; I admit that the Matter usually spoken of by Philosophers is supposed by them to be *Visible*, and that the Matter which I am here speaking of is supposed, and also prov'd, to be *Invisible*, nevertheless it must needs be granted that the Matter spoken of by Philosophers is supposed by them to be *External*; if not, it must be because they hold that *Visible* Matter is not *External*, or, that there is no such Thing as *External* Matter; neither of which will I believe be easily *granted*, much less (which is necessary in this Place) *contended* for against me. If then the Matter they speak about is supposed by them to be *External*, this is all that I am concerned for at present; the Question between us being only this simply, Whether *External* Matter Exists, or not? Or as usually express'd in Latin, *An Detur Materia Externa?*

Externa? No, say I; for it implies such and such Contradictions, which destroy the Being of it, or render its Existence impossible. Well; and what will an Adversary say to this? Will he deny that it implies these supposed Contradictions? No; 'tis here supposed that all Philosophers agree in affirming this Point. Will he then deny the Conclusion whilst he affirms the Premises? No certainly; for this is formal Scepticism, or no other than a Denial of all Truth, and Reason, and Consequence, at once. What remains then, but that we all conclude that External Matter is a Thing absolutely Impossible.

But you'll say, to conclude this with *Consent*, is to conclude the Nonexistence of *Visible* Matter, since Philosophers pretend to speak of no Matter but what they supposed to be Visible. I answer,

First, Why then I must conclude the same without Consent; the Damage one would think should not be great, provided it be allowed that my Conclusion is true; and for this I appeal to the Arguments by which I prove it, and which I suppose may be good, tho' they should happen to want Consent. But, *Secondly*, I deny that the Matter of which the Question concerning its Divisibility usually proceeds is supposed by Philosophers to be Visible Matter. This

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is evident from this, that the Matter of which they speak, is, and must be supposed to Exist after ever so many Divisions of it, even when it is become Invisible, by the frequency of its being divided.

It is not therefore *Visible*, but *External*, Matter, consider'd as *External*, of which Philosophers have disputed; and of which they say that it is both infinitely and finitely divisible and extended. And this Idea of its being *External*, or Independent (as to its Existence simple) on any Mind or perceptive Faculty, is so absolutely necessary to both these Questions, that neither of them have any Appearance of being a Question, upon the Removal of this Idea, and placing *Visible* in its stead. For a *Visible* World, or *Visible* Matter, consider'd as *not External*, Exists plainly as *Visible*, and consequently, *as such*, is extended, *as such* is Divisible. So that after this it carries a Contradiction with it, so much as to enquire whether it be Extended farther than it is *seen* to be Extended, or Divisible farther than it is *seen* to Exist. So that however by Accident Philosophers may have tumbled together the Two Ideas of *Visible* and *External*, *External* is the Idea only they are concerned with, and therefore it is *External* Matter alone whose Existence is encumbered with the forementioned Contradictions;

dictions ; and *so* incumbered, I say, as to
 make it necessary for us to conclude that
 it is absolutely Impossible there should be
 any such Thing. But yet *so* partial have
 I found some towards an External World,
 that when nothing has been found, which
 could with any Appearance be objected
 against the Evidence of this and the fore-
 going Argument, they have even drest up
Formal Nothing into the Shape of an Ob-
 jection: For I have been sometimes told,
 (and that with an Air of unusual Gravity,
 as if the Being of a Real Universe depen-
 ded on their Concern for it ; nay, as if
 Religion itself must fail if there be no Ex-
 ternal World,) that a Thing may be, and
 must sometimes be, judged by us to be true,
 whose Manner of Existence we cannot
 comprehend. That of this Sort are sever-
 al Articles of our *Christian Faith* ; as for
 Instance, the *Trinity in Unity*, the *Incar-*
nation of the Son of God, &c. which we
 believe to be true, tho' we acknowledge
 them to be Mysteries, nay, and are content
 to own, that with Regard to our shallow
 Reasonings, they are attended also with
 Contradictions. Why then must we con-
 clude that there is no External World,
 because of the Contradictions which seem
 to attend the Position of it? And to this
 Purpose I find it said by a very Judici-
 ous

ous * Author, that it is good to tire and fatigue the Mind with such Kind of Difficulties (as the Divisibility of Matter, &c.) in order to tame its Presumption, and to make it less daring ever to oppose its feeble Light to the Truths proposed to it in the Gospel, &c. I answer,

1. 'Tis a Sign indeed that our Understandings are very *weak* and shallow, when such Stuff as this shall not only pass for common Sense, but even look like Argument; and herein I confess my own as well as my Neighbour's Weakness. However,

2. If we will reason at all, we cannot well have a more Evident Principle to go upon than this, that *Being is Not Being*; that *what is is*; or that it is Impossible for the same Thing both to be and not be. If so, we must either say that Humility of Judgment is no Vertue, or that there is still Room enough left for the Exercises of it, whilst we hold this Principle without the least Doubt or Wavering. Nay,

3. It seems to me, that if we will reason at all, we should freely judge of whatsoever we perceive, so as first of all to agree in this, that *whatsoever we perceive to be Is*: For tho' it were true indeed that there is no such Thing as Truth, or tho' the

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Light

* Art of Thinking.

Light of our Understandings were ever so weak and feeble, yet till we have discovered this to be the Case, and whilst we all agree to Reason one with another, *That* must pass for the Truth which we perceive, and *That* must pass for perceiving which at present we are capable of, be it what it will in the Eye of a Superior Judgment or Understanding. To boggle therefore at *this*, is *not* Reasoning, but refusing to Reason at all; Is *not* Humility of Judgment, but open and avowed Scepticism? Is *not* an Acknowledgment of the Infinity of Truth, but an Evil, and Profane, and Atheistical, Denial of it? And yet,

4. Nothing more than *this* is requisite in the Case before us: Nothing, I say, but to affirm that *Being Is*, and not to deny our own Evident *Perceptions*. The *First* of these is the Resolution of the *Major*, and the other of the *Minor*, of both the foregoing Arguments, whereby I demonstrate the Impossibility of an External World: For can any Thing be more Evident than that *Finite* and *Infinite* are Exclusive of each other; and that an Idea which implies *both* is an Impossibility in Fact? And can we pretend to perceive any Thing at all when we pretend to doubt whether this is not the Fact or Implication of External Matter? Should we doubt in this Man-
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ner if the Subject spoken of were a *Circular Square* or *Triangular Parallelogram*? If not, I would fain know where our *Ignorance* lyes which is the Foundation of the Objection? We are ignorant indeed that there is any such Thing as External Matter, (and one would think for this Reason we should be so far from having any Partiality towards the Being of it, that we should conclude of Course that there is no such Thing in Being,) but on the other Hand we cannot so much as pretend Ignorance of the Premises by which this Conclusion is enforced. They are as evident as the Light, and also (as far as ever I could inform myself) universally acknowledged: Where then is the *Difficulty*, supposed by the fore-mentioned Author, in the Question about the Divisibility of Matter, &c. wherewith it is so good to fatigue our Presumptions? Why, nowhere that I can think but here, viz. to conceive how it is possible that such a Thing can Exist, whose Idea implies so manifest a Contradiction: And if this be all the *Difficulty*, it immediately vanishes, or loses its Name, as soon as we suppose that there is no such Thing or Matter, or make this the Question, Whether there be any such Thing, or not? For then, instead of *Difficulty*, it becomes *Light* and

and *Argument*, and is no other than a Demonstration of the Impossibility of its Existence. But now,

5. This does not in the least affect so as to become a Parallel Case with the Doctrine of the Trinity, &c. and that for several Reasons. As,

First, In that all who believe this Doctrine are very ready to acknowledge (and that with Reason too) that there is something Incomprehensible in it; whereas in the Demonstrations by which External Matter is proved to be both Finite and Infinite, (*viz.* in Extent and Divisibility,) I have shewed already, no Ignorance can be so much as pretended. Then again,

Secondly, The Articles of our Faith concerning the *Trinity*, &c. are, by Consent, allowed to be *Exempt* or *Particular* Cases, such as are not to be made Precedents for our Believing any other Points, notwithstanding the Difficulties which are seen to attend them. And this,

Thirdly, For a very good Reason; namely, because as to the *Truth* or *Fact* of these Doctrines we have an Evidence Irrefragable from *another* Quarter, (which is at least equal to the Evidence of Reason,) *viz.* the *Word of God*, which assures us of these Things, whereas we are, or are supposed to be, *wholly* Ignorant of the Being
or

or Existence of an External World. And after all,

Lastly, I utterly deny that there is any Contradiction in the Doctrines of the Trinity, &c. even rationally considered, which makes this and the Case of an External World to the last Degree unparallel: But now, it is the *Parallellism* of these Points which is the Thing contended for in the Objection; and if so, where is the Man that with a serious Face will argue this Matter with me; Who will say, I will not give up my Judgment for an *External, Invisible, Unknown* World, notwithstanding the manifest Contradictions which attend the Mention of it, on any other Terms but that of affirming or granting that there is a Contradiction in the Doctrine of the Ever-blessed Trinity? A *Socinian* or *Arian* will not say this, it being evident that the Objection is very Nonsense in their Mouths; and sure I am that an Orthodox Person would be ashamed to say so: And yet if it be not granted immediately that there is (as far as our Understandings can dive or penetrate) a Contradiction in the supposed Articles of the Trinity, &c. the Objection (even on this Account alone) is without all Foundation, and is no other than an *Ignoratio Elenchi*, in other Words, talking of Chalk with those that talk of Cheese.

CHAP. V.

ARGUMENT V.

ANother Argument, whereby it is to be demonstrated that there is *no External World*, is, That in *such* a World it is impossible there should be any such Thing as *Motion*; or rather (lest this should not seem Absurdity enough to stop Mens Judgments in Favour of such a World) it may be proved from the most simple and evident Ideas, *both* that there *may*, and *also* that there *cannot be* any Motion in it.

That there *may be* Motion in an External World is sufficiently evident from this, that it is supposed to be a *Creature*: If so, I have an Almighty Power on my Side to help forward the Conclusion, namely, that it is Moveable. And the Argument in Form will stand thus.

The Power of God is sufficient to move Created Matter,

But External Matter is suppos'd to be Created;

Ergo, The Power of God is sufficient to move it.

On

On the other Hand, Nothing is more evident than the *Impossibility* of Motion in an External World, considered as External. And that, *First*, In the *Whole*; *Secondly*, As to the several *Parts* of it.

I. As to the *Whole* I argue thus;

An Infinite Body or Expansion is not capable of being moved by any Power whatsoever,

But an External World is Infinite in Expansion;

Ergo, An External World is absolutely Immoveable, or incapable of being moved by any Power whatsoever.

That an Infinite Expansion is absolutely Immoveable is too evident to be proved, unless this will be admitted as something more so; namely, that Motion supposes a Place *possessed*, and afterwards *quitted* for another, which yet is Impossible and Contradictory, when affirmed of an Expansion or Body actually Infinite, which, as such, implies the Possession of *All* Place already; which therefore makes the Motion of such a Body or World a Fact absolutely Impossible. And then,

Secondly, That an External World, as such, is Infinite in Expansion; I appeal to those Arguments whereby this Proposition is usually proved by Philosophers, and which are allowed by all to be Demonstrative.

I shall not here fill my Paper with the Mention of any one, because I suppose my Reader does not need my Information, and also because it will be Time enough to do this when I am advertized of an Adversary. I shall only observe this, (as believing it may be of some Use to those who shall be at the Pains of considering this Matter,) *namely*, that whatever Arguments have been used to prove the World *to be Infinite* in Extent, will be found to have proceeded on the *Formal Notion* of its being *External*; whereas those which have been produced on the *Contradictory* Part have been altogether silent as to *this Idea*, and have proceeded either on the Idea of its being *Created*, or on the *Absurdities* attending the Supposition of Infinite; by which Proceeding it has still been granted, that notwithstanding these Arguments and Absurdities, an *External World, as such*, must needs be Infinite. Since therefore an Infinite World or Expansion is not capable of being moved, I conclude that an External World, considered in the *Whole*, is a Being absolutely Immoveable.

II. In like Manner it seems to be Impossible that there should be any such Thing as Motion in an External World, considered in the several *Parts* of it.

For

For *Motion* is supposed to be a *Translation* of a Body from *one* Point or Place to *another*. Now in such a Translation the *Space* or *Line* thro' which the Body moved is supposed to pass must be actually divided into *all* its Parts. This is supposed in the very Idea of Motion: But this *All* is *Infinite*, and this Infinite is *Abfurd*, and consequently it is equally *fo*, that there should be any Motion in an External World.

That an External Line or Space is compounded of Infinite Parts or Points, is evident by the same Argument by which any Body or Part of Matter (supposed to be External) is proved, and also allowed to be *fo*; namely, from the Idea of its being *Quantity*, *Body*, or *Extension*, and consequently Divisible, and not Annihilable by Division, which last is suppos'd in the Idea of its being External. But then on the other Hand, to affirm that a Line by Motion or otherwise is divided into Infinite Parts, is in my Opinion to say all the Absurdities in the World at once. For,

First, This supposes a *Number* actually Infinite, that is, a Number to which no Unite can be added, which is a Number of which there is no Sum Total, that is, no Number at all; consequently,

Secondly,

Secondly, By this Means the shortest Motion becomes equal to the longest, since a Motion to which nothing can be added must needs be as long as possible. This also,

Thirdly, Will make all Motions equal in Swiftneſs, it being Impoſſible for the ſwifteſt in any ſtated Time to do more than paſs thro' Infinite Points, which yet the ſhorteſt is ſuppoſed to do. To which may be added,

Laſtly, That ſuch Motion as this, however ſhort in Duration, muſt yet be ſuppoſed to be a Motion of All or Infinite Ages, ſince to every Point of *Space* or *Line* thro' which any Body is ſuppoſed to paſs, there muſt be a Point of *Time* correſponded: But Infinite Points of Time make an Infinite Time or Duration, &c.

Theſe are ſome of the Abſurdities which attend the Suppoſal of Motion in an External World; whence I might argue ſimply, that ſuch a World is Impoſſible: But leſt, as I ſaid before, this ſhould not be thought Abſurdity enough, that is, leſt any one ſhould admit ſuch a World, notwithstanding the Impoſſibility of Motion in it, I rather chuſe to defend and urge both Parts of the Contradiction, and conclude the Impoſſibility of the Being of ſuch a World, from both the *Poſſibility* and *Impoſſibility* of Motion
in

in it. The Argument in Form stands thus.

A World, in which it is both possible and impossible that there should be any such Thing as Motion, is not at all;

But this is the Case of an External World;

Ergo, There is no such World.

I suppose I need not here remind my Reader that I have proved already, and that it is here supposed, that a Visible or Sensible World is not External; neither if he has at all gone along with me in this Discourse, need I undertake to shew that these Absurdities about Motion do not in the least affect a *Sensible* or *Visible* World, but only an *External* World. Nevertheless, if upon a due Perusal of what I have here written, this seems yet to be wanting, I shall be ready, as soon as called upon, to give my Reader the best Satisfaction I am capable of as to this Matter.

CHAP. VI.

ARGUMENT VI.

A GAIN, It is with me an Argument against the Being of an External World, that there is no *Hypothesis of Vision*,
that

that I can imagine, or ever heard of, on the Supposition of such a World, but what in the *Fact* or *Act* of it implies an Impossibility.

I pretend not to have conversed with the Writings of Philosophers, however I am sure not enough with their Persons, to know all the Opinions there are or may have been about the Method of Vision; and so must content myself with those that I have met with, which are only these Two that at this Time I can remember, or think worth the Repeating.

One is the *Aristotelian*, or Old Account, which supposes certain *Images* to scale off from External Objects, and fly in at the Eye, &c. And the Other is the *Cartesian*, or *New Hypothesis*, which, instead of *Images* or Resemblances of Objects, scaling off from the Objects themselves, accounts for Vision from the Reflection of Subtle Matter, (*viz.* that which proceeds in a direct Line from the Sun) from the Object to the Eye, &c.

I stand not here to enquire which of these is true, or the most probable Account of Vision, on the Supposition of an External World, being here concerned not in *Physicks*, but *Metaphysicks*, or an Enquiry into *Simple*, not *Hypothetical*, Truth. Neither am I concerned to consider these
Two

Two Hypotheses apart, tho' they are so vastly different; for as different as they are upon the Whole, they agree in all that which I am concerned to take Notice of, *namely*, that the Act of Vision is the Effect of certain Parts of Matter, (whether Images, or not,) which proceeding from the Objects, respectively affect or act upon the Optick Nerve, &c.

This is that which I take to be an Impossibility, or so attended with Difficulties in the *Actu Exercito* of it, as to be the nearest to an Impossibility of any Thing that we know of. For,

First, These *Parts*, as being Material or Extended, must needs be *Impenetrable*, that is, they must each possess a Space by itself, and cannot (two or more, much more an Infinite Number of them) be crouded into one Point, or the Place of one. Nevertheless it is possible for a Man's Eye in *one and the same Point* to see a Vast and almost Infinite Number of Objects which are in Heaven and on Earth. There is then a Necessity that from each of these Bodies there should be communicated or sent a *Line* or *Train* of subtle Part or Images upon the *one Point* of the Eye, which, how it is possible to be in *Fact*, I leave to be considered by all those who profess to know what they mean when they say, Bodies are *Impenetrable*.
Secondly,

Secondly, There is not *any* one Point in the Universe, wherein the Eye supposed or fixed, cannot perceive an innumerable Company of Objects. There is not then any one Point in the Universe, wherein Lines of subtle Matter, or Images, from all these supposed innumerable Objects, do not *actually* *concentre*. If this is thought possible by any, I must be content to leave it with them, since nothing is more evident with me, than that the *Fact* of this is utterly *Impossible*.

From these and such like Absurdities, which attend every Hypothesis of Vision in an External World, I think I am bound to conclude that there is no such World. For it seems to me at present, that if there is an External World, *one* or *other* of these Accounts of Vision must needs be the *true*, that is *Fact*. But as these appear to be *impossible in Fact*, they seem to derive their Impossibility upon the World which they belong to, or which supposes them.

This, I say, will follow, till some *other* Account of Vision, in an External World, be produced or named, which is not liable to these, or any like Absurdities; or which, even on the *Concession* of an External World, may not plainly be demonstrated to be false.

In the mean Time nothing of all this affects a *Sensible* or *Visible* World, supposed and

and granted to be not External. For then any Hypothesis of Vision, which has no other Falshood in it, but what is derived upon it from the Non-existence or Impossibility of an External World, will be the true Hypothesis, or Account of Vision. For, by Truth in this Case, will then be meant no other than the Will of God, the great Author of Nature, who giveth us such and such Sensations, by such and such Laws. And in this Sense, a Law or Rule of Vision, may be Possible and even True in its Cause, tho' it has no Truth in its Self, or, is Impossible in Fact. And so, with this Explanation, I am very ready to say, that the Second, or Cartesian Account, is the true Hypothesis of Vision. For tho' there be indeed no External World, yet such a World Exists as far as it is possible; and it has been granted in the Beginning, that it is according to the Will of God, that the Visible World should carry in it every Character of being External, except the Truth of Fact, which is absolutely impossible. But the Discovery of this last is within the Province of Metaphysicks, which has to do only with simple Being or Existence; whereas this about the Method of Vision is a Question of a grosser Size, and a much lower Degree of Abstraction; and its Resolution is to be sought for only in the Will of God, by which he willed his
Creatures,

Creatures, viz. Material Creatures. But in *this Will* we see an External World, even an *External Visible* World, as I observed just now. So that this being the first Will, must be *first supposed*, or taken for granted by Consent. And then, I believe, it will be found that this Account of Vision (as well as several Parts of the same Philosophy which have been objected against) will have lost all its Difficulty, and must pass for *true*.

CH A P. VII.

A R G U M E N T VII.

A *Gain*, as by an External World we are supposed to mean certain Objects which do not Exist in, or in Dependance on, any Mind or Faculty of Perception, at least of any Creature; so when I contemplate the Idea of such a *Self-subsisting Being*, I profess I am put hard to it to reconcile it with the Character of a *Creature*, or to discover how it can be understood to subsist at all on the Mind, or Will, or Power, of God, who is supposed to be the Creator of it. For,

First as to its *Being simply*, it is past my Skill to distinguish it from *being Simple, Absolute, or Universal*. We are taught in-
deed

deed to say, that every Creature of God needs the same Power to preserve, which was necessary to the Creation of it; and Christian Philosophers are generally agreed, that this Power of God is so necessary to the Preservation, or continu'd Being, of every Creature as such, that it must return to its Primitive Nothing, merely from the *Abstraction* or Withdrawing of this Power.

But do we understand what we say when we apply this Doctrine to an External World, either in the whole, or in the several Parts of it? We see it indeed in the Idea which we have of Creature, and in the Absurdities which attend an absolute Existence applied to any Thing but God alone; but do we see any such Dependance as to Being or Existence in the Idea, which we conceive of an External World? Consider but this *House*, this *Tree*, this any Thing amongst the Objects of an External World, or of the Visible World, suppos'd (as usual) to be External, is there any Sign of Weakness or Dependance in any of these Things consider'd by us in this View? Will not an External *House* stand or *be*, unless a Foreign Power continue to support it? Or does it seem to us to be any Thing like those Things of which we speak, when we speak

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of certain Beings which have no Subsistence of their own, no Truth of Being but in *Relation* or *Resemblance*, and which would cease to be, barely by an Abstraction of a supporting Power, which is different from the Things themselves? A House indeed may be a good, or useful, or convenient House, only as it stands related to an Idea in the Mind, or Intellect of its Maker, and may be said to stand in its present *Form*, only as supported by certain Foreign Causes; but we are speaking here, not of the External Form, but of the simple Truth or Being of Things; and even in this Respect we say that Things Subsist altogether by a Relation to the Intellect, or in Dependence on the Will of God. But I say, does this seem to be the Case of an External Piece of Matter? Do we conceive this as having no absolute Being, or Substance of its own; as a mere Nothing, but by Resemblance, and what would cease to be on the Instant of the Cessation of God's Will to preserve it? I know what another may Answer to all these Questions, and I cannot help it, let Men Answer what they will; but still I must insist and say, that if another will affirm, that he thus conceives of External Matter, he must teach me to do the same from some other Idea besides that of Creature,

ture, *namely*, from the Consideration of the Thing itself; or else I must conclude that he affirms this, not because he understands any Thing of the Matter spoken of, but because the Truth in general forces him to say this. But this is the chief Thing which makes against his Point. For to say that External Matter Exists wholly on the Will of God; because this is the Condition of a Creaturely Existence, is only to say in general, that the Existence of a Creature is necessarily thus dependant. But this is what I affirm; and hence arises the Difficulty, *viz.* how we can conceive External Matter to Exist by this Rule, or how to reconcile the absolute and stable Existence of Matter suppos'd to be External, with this necessary and indispensable Character of a Creature's Being. My Business is to deny that there is any such Creature for this Reason, because it carries in the Idea of it an absolute kind of Existence, which no Creature is capable of; and for this I appeal to the Judgment of all others; so that if another will yet contend that there is any such Creature, he must not argue with me that it does and must so Exist because it is a Creature, for this is plainly begging the Question; but must make Answer on the other Hand, how a Creature, which is and must be understood to have a Self-subsistence,

stence, or a proper Substance of its own, can be said to Exist, whilst it is acknowledged, as before, that every Creature, as such, Exists altogether in Dependence on the Power or Will of God. This is the Difficulty which attends an External World, consider'd in its several *Parts*. And this,

Secondly, Is rather increased, if we consider it in the whole; for then nothing but its *Expansion* comes under Consideration. And this is plainly Infinite. And if not Infinite *Nothing*, must be Infinite *Something*, that is, Being or Substance. But is there any Thing in this Idea which squares with the indispensable Character of a Creature? For this I appeal to every one's Idea of an Expanded Universe, particularly to theirs, who (if I may guess,) are not a few, who from the Consideration of the Firm and Substantial Existence of the Visible World, supposed by them to be External, think themselves compelled to believe, that simple Space or Extention is the very Substance of God himself; and therefore how to conceive it possible that such a Thing shou'd Exist, which on one Hand we are compelled to call a *Creature*, and on the other cannot forbear to understand as *God*, I leave to be explained by those who yet retain any Fondness for such

such a Thing. Thus much of the Existence simple of an External World; I come next to consider the *Unity* which it implies.

Here then I observe, that an External World implies in it all the *Unity*, which any Being whatsoever, which Universal Being, which God himself, is capable of.

Consider it in its *whole*, and it has the *Unity of Infinity*. It is *one alone*, and is absolutely incapable of being multiplied by any Power whatsoever; which is as much as can be said of God, and even more than they have a Right to say, who consider him, not as Universal, but some Particular Being. Consider it in its several *Parts*, or Bodies included in it, and each Particle of Matter has such a *Unity* in, or Identity with itself, as I think shou'd not be ascribed to any Thing but God, who alone is the *same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever*. Again, I consider, That an External World is Independent on the Will of God, consider'd in its Expansion, which will and must be *Infinite*, whether God pleases to Make, or Will it to be so or not, supposing only that he Wills to Produce or Make any the least Extent, or that any the least Part or Extent is Made, or in Being.

As for Instance, Let God be supposed to Will the Being of a certain Cubical Part of

Matter or Extention, about the Bigness of a common Die. This, I say, is impossible in Fact, and this draws another Impossibility after it, which is, that by this the Will of God is over-ruled or frustrated by the Work of his own Hands. For what shou'd bound this Cubical Extent? It must be Something or Nothing. If Nothing, it is plainly Infinite; if Something, it must be Matter or Extension; and then the same Question returns, and will infinite return, or be never satisfied under an Extent actually infinite. But this is an Independency of Being, which I think can belong to no Creature, it being the same with that which we use to call *necessary Existence*. I conclude therefore that there is no such Creature as an External World.

Lastly, Much the same Sort of Difficulty occurs if we consider it in *Not Being*, after it has been supposed to Exist. That God can *Annihilate* every Creature which he has made, is, I think, a Maxim undisputed by any; if so, I think it plainly follows, that *that* which in its Idea implies an utter Impossibility of being Annihilated, is a Thing in Fact impossible. But this, I say, is the Case or Implication of an External World. This is evident from the foregoing Article, which shews the absolute Necessity of its being Infinite, on the

Suppo-

Supposition of the being of but the least Part or Particle of it: For certainly if nothing less than Infinite can Exist, or be Made, no Part of this Infinite can be Unmade, or Annihilated. And therefore tho' in Words we may say that God can Annihilate any Part of it, yet we utter that in Words, of which we can have no Conception, but rather the contrary to it. For Annihilate it in *Supposition* as often as you will, yet still it returns upon you; and whilst you wou'd conceive it as *Nothing*, it becomes *Something* to you against your Will; and it is impossible to *think* otherwise, whatever we may say.

I believe I shou'd lose my Time and Pains if I shou'd attempt in this Place to shew, that the Supposition of a *Visible*, which is not an External World, is attended with none of these Difficulties. This wou'd be a thankless Office with all those who *are not* yet convinced, but that an External World may yet stand, notwithstanding these pretended Difficulties; and it wou'd be an Injury to those that *are*, as preventing them in certain pleasant and very easie Considerations. And so I leave it to take its Chance with all my Readers in common.

C H A P. VIII.

A R G U M E N T VIII.

A *Nother* Difficulty which still attends the Notion of an External World, is, that if any such World Exists, there seems to be no Possibility of Conceiving, but that God himself must be *Extended* with it.

This I take to be Absurdity enough in Reason, to hinder us from supposing any such World. But so unfortunate are the Stars of this Idol of our Imagination, that it is as much impossible, on another Account, that it shou'd Exist, tho' this were no Absurdity, or though it were supposed and allowed that God himself were Extended.

I suppose then in the *First* Place, that God is not Extended. If so, I say there can be no External World. For if there be an External World, and if it be a Creature, we must suppose that God is every where present *in*, and *with* it; for he is supposed to *preserve* and *do* every Thing that is done in it. To deny this, is to shut him out of the Universe, even altogether to deny his Being. On the contrary, to affirm that he is thus Present with every

Part

Part and Particle of it, is to make him *Co-extended*, which is contrary to the Supposition.

Yes, it may be said, God is Extended, and consequently there may be an External World, notwithstanding this Dilemma. I Answer,

Secondly, Be it so, that he is Extended, (to humour a corrupt and absurd Itch of Argumentation,) yet this Nothing avails towards the Being of an External World, but directly towards the Non-existence of it. For if God be Extended, and as we must also say, infinitely Extended, where shall we find *Room* for an External World? Can Two Extentions, infinite Extentions, Coexist? This is evidently impossible. So that all the Choice we are left to is to acknowledge *God* or an *External World*; which, I think, is a Choice we need not long be deliberating upon. I conclude therefore, that if God is, there is no External World.

I know but one Way of *answering* this Argument, and that is, to affirm that an External World is God himself, and not a Creature of God. But 'till some one shall be so hardy as to appear publickly in Defence of this, I shall think it but a Loss of Time and Pains to consider of or debate it.

CHAP. IX.

ARGUMENT IX.

I Promised in some Part of Argument IV. that I wou'd consider farther of what *Philosophers* say of External Matter; and here I intend to be as good as my Word.

I have shewn in my (*) former Part of this Treatise, that the *Matter* so much disputed of by *Philosophers* is not understood by them to be *Visible*. This of itself is an Argument that they had, or cou'd pretend to have, but a very faint and imperfect Idea of the Thing they were speaking of. Accordingly I shall here proceed to shew, that they neither did, nor cou'd, pretend to mean any Thing at all by it. And,

First, for the *Definitions* which they have deliver'd to us of Matter, *Aristotle* defines it thus. Η ὕλη αἰτιον ἐξ ἧς γινεται τι. *Materia est ex quâ Res, vel aliquod est.* This, by no inconsiderable † *Philosopher*, is called *optima Definitio Materiae*. And the same is by *Baronius* (*Metaph. Pag. 172.*) defin'd thus. *Materia Substantialis est Substantia*

* Chap. I. Sect. II. Argument V. † Scheib. Met. Cap. 22. 158.

stantia incompleta in quâ Forma aliqua substantialis existit. And sometimes again thus, *Substantia incompleta capax forma.*

These are all the Definitions that I shall mention, and these I suppose are sufficient to convince us that they meant nothing at all by the Matter which they here speak of. For what is there in either of these Definitions besides the indeterminate Notion of *Being in General*, that is, Something, but Nobody knows what, or whether it be any Thing at all or no. This I say is all that I can make or understand by it; and this amounts to the same, as if they had told us in plain Words, that they mean nothing at all. But this,

Secondly, they tell us yet more expressly in the *Descriptions* and Characters which they give of Matter.

As for Instance * *Baronius* delivers it as the common Sense of all Philosophers, that *Materia non est in prædicamento*, and that *non habet proprie dictum Genus*. This is the same as if he had told us in express Words, that the most they mean by it, is being indefinite, or something, but they know not what. For that which is not in the Predicaments, is allow'd to be neither *Substance* nor *Accident*, (unless it be God, or Universal Being,) and what is neither of these is confessedly nothing at all. Again,

* Met. p. 189.

Again, St. *Austin* is always quoted by Philosophers for his Description of Matter, as an Explanation of the common Meaning, and it is thus * exprest. *Materia est infima omnium rerum, & prope nihil.*

Much after the same Manner it is describ'd by Porphyry, *Materia prima ex se est incorporea, neq; intellectus, neq; anima, neq; aliud secundum se vivens, informis, immutabilis, infinita, impotens, quapropter nequens, sed verum non-ens.* But this is a little more than *prope nihil*, and I suppose may be said to amount fully to the Sense of the *English* Word, *Nothing*.

In like Manner *Aristotle* himself, who has given almost all other Philosophers their Cue, is for nothing better known than for his most Intelligible Description of Substantial Matter. He calls it, *Nec Quid, nec Quale, nec Quantum*; to which I think I may fairly add, *Nec Aliquid*, as the proper Sense and Consequence of this Description. Nay, to confirm this as the true Interpretation and Design of his Words, I have many times seen him quoted by his Followers, for saying positively that *Materia est non Ens*; one Instance of which I particularly remember, viz. *Scheibl. Metaph. Cap. 22. 167.*

Perhaps

* L. 12. *Confess. Cap. 7.* † *Lib. de Occasionib. c. 21.*

Perhaps so, you will say, but yet all Philosophers are agreed in the *Being* of it, and all argue it to Be, or to have a Real Existence. I Answer,

First, If they will contradict their own Positions, as it is not in my Power to help, so it is hard that I should suffer for it. But *Secondly*, how is it that they *argue* the Existence of Matter? Do they argue it with a supposed *Adversary*, or only with *themselves*? If with *themselves* only, this is nothing at all; for in this Case they may have the Question for asking; and so this kind of arguing is only Grimace and Banter. But if they argue it with an *Adversary*, who is supposed to doubt it, I am this *Adversary*, and let their Reasons be produced.

In the mean Time I affirm that they argue only with *themselves*; that is, they grant themselves the Question, upon all Occasions, and whensoever they please.

Their Arguments are such as these, some of which I have mentioned * already.

Matter Is, or Exists, say they, because it Is, or is supposed to be Created. Here the *Adversary*, if any, is supposed to *grant* that it is *Created*, but yet to *doubt* whether it Is, or Exists, or not. That is, he is
sup-

supposed to be a drivelling Fool, or no Adversary at all, which is plainly the Case.

Again, Matter Is, or Exists, because it is supposed to be Part of a *real Compositum*. This is the very same Case as before.

For surely whoever can be brought to grant that it is a real Part of a *Compositum*, cannot be supposed to doubt whether it Exists or not.

Again, if Matter were Nothing, it cou'd do nothing, it cou'd not be the Subject of Generation and Corruption; but this last is supposed (Thanks to the kind Opponent!) *Ergo*, Matter is not Nothing.

Again, (saith Christopher Scheibler, *Cap. 15, 45.*) *Materia habet Essentiam, quia Ens est.* And with the same ease you are told by all Philosophers together, that *Ens est quod habet Essentiam*. This is round about our Coal-fire, in other Words, arguing in a Circle, or no arguing at all.

Again, (*Cap. 22, 167.*) he puts the Question simply, *An materia sit Ens*. And this is the Resolution of it. If Matter were not *Ens*, it wou'd be the same Thing to say, that any Thing *sit ex nihilo*, as *Ex Materia*. And again, it *must be Something*, because Something is constituted of it.

These and such like (for I am tired with repeating them) are the mighty Arguments
by

by which Philosophers demonstrate the Being of *External Matter*. If you will take their Words you may; for I think nothing is more evident than that this is all you have to do in the Case; unless (which I think much more adviseable) you will chuse to believe with me, that they never designed any other than to amuse the *Ignorant*, but yet to give every Intelligent Reader [an *Item*, by this Procedure, that the *Matter* they are speaking about is *nothing at all*.

If so, I have a vast *Authority* on my Side: Which, if not sufficient to inforce the Conclusion simply with all Readers, because some there may be who have but little Opinion of this kind of Authority, yet with all must have this Effect, to remove the *Prejudice* which may lye on their Minds against this my Conclusion, on the Account of its appearing *Strangers* and *Novelty*. And tho' some Authors on certain Subjects may have good Reason rather to *cherish* than *lessen* the Opinion of their *Novelty*, yet considering all Things, if I were certain to have *removed* what these are supposed to *desire* by any Thing I have said in the present Chapter, I am perswaded it would avail me more in the Event, than Ten Thousand the most evident Demonstrations *without* it. And indeed it was the Prospect of this Effect

Effect alone, which induced me to Number this Chapter amongst my *Arguments* against the Being of an External World.

C H A P. X.

Objections Answered.

BUT now it is Time to attend to what may be urged on the *other* Side, viz. in Favour of an External World.

But what Favour can belong, or be due, to *that which* is, or can be of no Use, if it were in Being, *which* is all over Contradiction, *which* is contrary to the Truth and Being of God, and after all is supposed to be utterly unknown? Who wou'd ever attempt to form an Argument for the Being of such a Thing as this? For as *unknown*, it must be *supposed* to be *Nothing*, even by those who are preparing themselves to prove that it is Something. So that well may all *particular* Objections be said to be false or insufficient, when it is against the Supposition of the Question to suppose any Objections at all, or but the *Possibility* of an Objection.

Never-

Nevertheless, where Men are thoroughly inclined to hold fast their Point, notwithstanding all the Evidence in the World to the contrary, there is a possible Room for Two or Three Things, which, for ought I know, some Persons may call *Objections*. And they are these that follow.

Objection I.

Does not the *Scripture* assure us of the Existence of an External World?

Answer.

1. Not as I know of. If it does you would do well to name to me that Text wherein this is revealed to us; otherwise I have no Way to Answer this Objection but that of taking into Consideration every Sentence in the whole Bible, which I am sure you will believe is more than I need do. But,

2. To do this Objection all the Right I can, I will suppose a Passage or Two in the Word of God; and I should think, if such a one is anywhere to be found, it will be in the *First Chapter of Genesis*, where *Moses* speaks of the Creation of the Material World. Here it is said, that *In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the*

I

Earth,

Earth, and also that all Material Things were made some Days before the first Man, and so cannot be said to Exist only relatively on the Mind of Man. To this I Answer,

1. This Objection from Scripture is taken from Mr. * *Malebranche*, and is his last Resort on which to found the Being of an External World. But then the External World, which he contends for, is prov'd by him before, and here suppos'd to be no Object of Sense, and consequently Invisible. And it was for this Reason (it being an Objection peculiar to this Author) that I deferr'd the Mention of it to this Place, where also an External World is supposed to be Invisible. Here then my Answer to the Author is this, that the Tendency of this Passage of Scripture is not to prove the Being of an External (suppos'd to be an) Invisible World, but the External Being or Existence of the Visible World: For it is here suppos'd that the Visible World Existed before the first Man saw it. But this is as much against himself as me, and therefore is no Objection, as coming from that Quarter. But another may think that there is an Answer due, not only to the *Author*, but to the *Objection* itself; be it so, I Answer,

2. That

* *Search. Illustr. Tom. 11. Pag. 114. Taylor's Translation. Ed. 2.*

2. That it seems to me there is nothing in this Passage which affirms the *Visible* World to be *External*. And my reason for this is, because there is nothing in it but what is very consistent with believing that the *Visible* World is not *External*.

For *First*, Is it said that God created the Heaven and Earth? Meaning by it, that all those Things which either we or any other intelligent Creatures behold, are not their *own Causes* of Existence, or of an Existence *necessary*, but receive and derive their whole Being from another Cause, viz. God. Is any Thing of this denied in Consequence of affirming, that a visible Object, as such, is not *External*? Or, does this make it to be of necessary Existence, or to be its own Cause, or to be the Effect of any Thing but the Will of God, who after the Counsel of his own Will gives or causes such and such Sensations in us? Or *Secondly*, is there (as some learned Interpreter's have thought) a *particular* sense and meaning in the Words, *In Principio*, Εν ἀρχῇ or בראשית, as if one Design of the Text was to tell us, that God the Father made all Things by, and thro', and in, his *Son*, who is frequently in Scripture Characteris'd by *this* and by a *proper* Name? If so, is it inconsistent with this Doctrine to hold that a *Visible* Object, as such, is not

External to the Mind or Faculty which perceives it? So far from this, that this Doctrine seems to be intelligible only on this Hypothesis; and I think I have shewn already, that an External World, as such, (whether Visible or Invisible) is of too absolute an Existence to Exist only in the Mind or Will of God, or the Son of God, as every Creature is said to do in this Text. So that if this Text, thus interpreted, proves any Thing to the present Purpose, it proves the contrary to that which it is alledg'd for. Or, *Thirdly*, Is it said, that the Visible World Existed, or had its Being, before the first Man *Adam* was created? And did it not thus Exist when *Ap̄x̄n* beheld it, when it had past the *Wisdom*, and was come into the *Will* of God? Or might not the *Angels* see and live in it, (who knows how long?) Before the Man whom we call *Adam* was produced into Being? Or *Lastly*, must all this go for Nothing because of the little Syllable *The*, which is prefixt in the Text to the Words *Heaven* and *Earth*? As if by this we were oblig'd to understand an absolute and strict *Identity* between the Visible World, consider'd in the Will of God, or in the Minds of the *Angels*, and that which was afterwards perceiv'd by *Adam*? This is a slender Thread indeed, whereon to hang the whole Weight

Weight of an Universe. But must I myself be forbid the Use of this important Word *The*, because I hold that a Visible Object is not External; and because in Consequence of this Position there will be found only an Identity of *Similitude* between the Visible World which God made in the Beginning, and that which *Adam* had a Sensation of; and consequently between that which *Peter* and that which *John* sees, at the same or different Times? Must I never say that I have seen *the* Sun, because on my Hypothesis the Sun which I am suppos'd to see, is not the same *strictly* with that which God seeth, or which is seen by another Person? And must I for this Reason never use the Expression of *the* Visible World, *the* Heaven and Earth, &c? But then, will that be denied to God, which is and must be allowed to me? Where then is there so much as an Appearance of an Objection in the Text before us? For my Part, I can see none, either in this, or any other that I know of, in the Word of God, but what is fully answer'd in what I have replied to this; and therefore cannot but believe that it would be Time ill-spent to suppose or name any other. Yet *Thirdly*, Others I might very easily name, such as those which speak of the Apparition of Angels, of several Miracles, particularly that

of coming into a Room whilst the Doors were shut, &c.) which suppose the Visible World to be not External, which would be turning the Objector's Cannon against himself. But I shall spare my Reader, the Objector, and myself, and so add no more Particulars to my Answer in this Place.

Objection II.

Is there no Allowance due or to be made to that strong and natural *Inclination* which all Men have to believe an External World?

Answer I.

You may remember the Mention of this Objection * before, where I told you it is the Argument by which Mr. Des Cartes satisfied himself of the Existence of an External World.

In my Answer to it I suppos'd *Two* Things, *either* that by an External World was meant the Being of a World, which, as External, is suppos'd to be *Invisible*, or the External Being of the *Visible* World. To the *last* of these Meanings I have given in my Answer, which my Reader either does or

* Part I. Chap. II. *Objection* III.

or may recollect at Pleasure. I am now (according to my Promise in that Place) to make Answer to this Objection in the *First* of the foremention'd Meanings.

This, in all Right and Reason, should be the true Intent and Meaning of this great Philosopher. For my own Part I think I could very easily shew, that either he must mean this, or be inconsistent with himself, which is to mean nothing at all; and if so, the Objection is answer'd before any Part of it is consider'd. But I need not be at the Trouble of entering into this Inquiry, it being sufficient in this Place to shew, that in the Sense suppos'd it has not the Reality, or so much as the Pretence, of being an Argument. And that is done in a Word, by denying the Supposition of it, which is, that we have any the least Inclination to believe the Existence of an External World, suppos'd to be Invisible. This is evident at first Sight, and yet this alone destroys the whole Force of the Objection. " Strange!
 " That a Person of Mr. *Des Cartes's* Sagacity should be found in so plain and
 " palpable an Oversight; and that the late
 " Ingenious Mr. *Norris* should be found
 " treading in the same Track, and that
 " too upon a Solemn and Particular Disquisition of this Matter. That whilst on
 " one Hand they contend against the com-

“ mon Inclination or Prejudice of Mankind,
 “ that the Vifible World is not External,
 “ they should yet appeal to this fame com-
 “ mon Inclination for the Truth or Being
 “ of an External World, which on their
 “ own Principles must be said to be Invi-
 “ sible, and for which therefore (they
 “ must needs have known if they had con-
 “ sider’d it) there neither is, nor can be,
 “ any kind of *Inclination*.

Well, you’ll say, but is there no Allow-
 ance due to the natural Inclination, which
 we all have to believe that the Vifible
 World is External, and consequently this
 Way, that there is an External World?

Answer II.

Yes certainly, provided you believe the
 Truth, viz. that there neither is, nor can
 be, any such Thing as an External World,
 you may freely make Use of the common
 Language, (which is a Creature of God,
 and which by his Messengers, and even in
 his own Person, he has sanctified to us the
 Use of, if we believe the Truth,) notwith-
 standing that there is scarce a Word in it
 but what supposes the Being of an External
 World, or that the Vifible World is Exter-
 nal. It is the Truth which makes us Free,
 and they only are in Bondage who are ig-
 norant

norant of the Truth, or refuse to admit it. If therefore it be true, that there is no External World, common Language is indeed extremely corrupt; but they only are involv'd in this Corruption who know not this Truth, or deny the Evidence of it. And the same Arguments by which it is demonstrated to be a Truth, prove the Use of all Language unclean to such as these. For such are Servants to the Power of a corrupt Language, and know not their Right of Freedom from it; and this makes them guilty of all the Errors which it supposes. Whereas those who know and believe this Truth, are free to use any Language, or Way of Speaking, wherein this Truth is not *formally* or *directly* contradicted, without being accountable for the Corruption of Human Language. Thus we believe the Circumvolution of the Earth, and the Central Rest of the Sun, according to the *Copernican* System; but yet so much is due to the Natural Inclination which we all find in ourselves to believe the contrary, as to excuse and justify us in the Use of a Language altogether *Ptolemaic*. Thus we know and can demonstrate, that the Light which we behold is not any Property or Affection of the Sun, suppos'd to be in the Heavens; but an Affection in, or belonging to, ourselves; yet we are altogether free from

from the Error of supposing the contrary, tho' we often say that the Sun is luminous, or Words to that Effect. *Thus again*, when the Sun shines full in our Face, tho' we know for certain that the Pain we feel is not in our Eye, but only in our Souls, yet so much is due to the Natural Inclination, whereby we judge that all Sensations are in our Bodies, that we are free on a Thousand Occasions to suppose the contrary in Words, as we always do when we say, that the Light of the Sun *afflicts* our Eyes, or makes them sore, that our Head or Tooth *akes*, or other Words to this Purpose. *Thus lastly*, (to go but one Step higher, even that one which mounts us into that Region of Truth or Abstraction which the present Theory supposes us to be in,) tho' we know (as by this Time I hope we know) that an External World is a Being absolutely impossible; *yet*, or rather *because* we know this, we are, on infinite Occasions, free from the Error on the contrary Side, tho' we use a Language which continually supposes the Visible World to be External. This I say is the *Liberty* of believing the Truth, and this Truth thus believ'd does so fully sanctifie even a corrupt and erroneous Language to our Use, as to make it our *Duty*, as well as *Liberty*, (even a Debt we owe to the great Author of Nature and of Language,)

Language,) to express our Minds to each other in a Way suitable to our present State, tho' both our Nature and our Language suggest and suppose the contrary to this Truth. And now I hope this Objection is fully answer'd. But I expect another in its Place, (which is near about the same as to Force and Consequence,) and that is to be told.

Objection III.

That the late judicious Mr. Norris, who (in his *Ideal World*, Vol. I. Chap. IV.) purposely consider'd this Question of an External World, was yet so far from concluding as I have here done, that he declares it to be no other than errant *Scepticism* to make a serious Doubt or Question of its Existence.

Answer.

I have chosen to place this in the Form of *Objection*, that I may seem rather to *defend* myself, than voluntarily *oppose* this Author, for whose Writings and Memory I have a great Esteem. But what shall I say in this Case? Must I give up all the Arguments by which I have shewn that there is no External World, in Complaisance to this *Censure*,

sure, because it is the Great and Excellent Mr. Norris's? But has he supported this Saying by any Arguments in Favour of that which he calls it *Scepticism* to doubt of? Has he proved an External World to be of the Number of those evident Truths which are of no reasonable Doubt, nor to be seriously questioned by any sober Understanding? Or so much as pretended to Answer any Argument alledged for its Non-Existence? No, not a Word of this is to be found in the whole Chapter, unless the Argument from *Inclination*, which is the Subject of the former Objection, will be here named against me. Well then, and must this too pass for an Argument, notwithstanding that I have shewn the Weakness of it? And so, must all that I have hitherto contended for, submit to the Power of this great *Authority*, on Peril of my being thought a *Sceptic*?

But is not this the Way to be betray'd into the very Dregs of *Scepticism*, to make a Doubt of one's own most evident Perceptions for fear of this Imputation? Or can a Man give better Proof that this does not belong to him, than by putting (as I have all along done) his Cause or Assertion on the Issue of a fair *Debate* on plain *Reason* and *Argument*? And can any Thing be a plainer *Mark* of *Scepticism* than to *refuse*

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to stand, or be concluded by this Issue, appealing from thence to *Judgment* or *Authority*? This is what I said from the beginning, and I have shew'd it, I think, in every Instance of an Objection since, that my Adversary all along is no other than *Prejudice*, which is *formal Scepticism*; and yet nothing has been so constantly charged against myself as this very Imputation. And it is this alone which has made it so considerable with me, as to set formally about an Answer to it.

But to speak *particularly* to the Author's Censure, with which we are at present concerned.

Is it so much as true in *Fact* that he has said any such Thing as is affirmed in the Objection? This perhaps even a *Sceptic* will contend fairly with me; for *Facts* are the Things they are observed to be most fond of. Well, let this be tried (as it ought to be) by his own Words.

There are Two, and as I remember but Two, Passages in this Chapter which speak at all to this Purpose. One is Page 188, the other 205. In the *First* of these I immediately find these Words. *Much less wou'd I be suspected of indulging a Sceptical Humour, under Colour of Philosophical Doubting, to such an Extravagance as to make any serious Question of that General and Collective*

lective Object of Sense a Natural World: The other is this; But as to the Existence of Bodies, tho' it be a Thing of no reasonable Doubt, nor to be seriously questioned by any sober Understanding, &c.

Here the Thing that is not to be doubted of, (at the Hazard of the Sobriety of our Understanding, and upon Peril of Scepticism,) is the *Existence* of Bodies, the *Existence* of a Natural World, which is *supposed* to be the Object of *Sense*. Well, and what is this to me? Have I been doubting of the *Existence* of *Bodies*? Or of the Natural or *Sensible* World? Let the meanest of my Readers be my Witness, that I have been so far from doubting of any Thing of this, that I have even contended on all Occasions that nothing is or can be more evident than the *Existence* of *Bodies*, or of a *Sensible* World. Have I repeated the same Thing some Hundreds of Times, and yet still is there Need to have it observed, that an *External* World is the moot Point between us? That, not the *Existence*, but the *Extra-existence* of the *Sensible* World, is the Point I have been arguing against? And that not a Natural, *supposed* to be a *Sensible*, World, but an *External* World, *as such*, is impossible? But there is not a Word of an *External* World in the Two Sentences before-mentioned; and therefore nothing in the least
against

against the Confusion which I am concerned for.

True, you'll say, but this was only a Mistake in the Manner of expressing it; for that the whole Drift and Argument of this Chapter supposes the Subject to be an External World. I answer,

Right; that is the Thing I have been all this while expecting, *viz.* a little of his Argument in the Place of his Authority; and you see this we must come to before there can be any Decision.

But alas! to what Purpose? For I find these Words in the very Title of his Chapter, *viz.* *That the Existence of the Intelligible is more certain than that of the Natural and Sensible World.* This destroys, and doubly destroys, all again. For, *First*, Here he speaks not of all *External*, but *Sensible*, World; and of this, not of its External Existence, which is the Point I have been arguing against; but simply of its Existence, which is the Point I have been arguing for. And yet,

Secondly, His End proposed is not to Aggravate, but Lessen, its Certainty: And this is the Drift and Argument of the whole Chapter, at least of about Thirty Pages of it; the rest being employed in a Digression concerning the Comparative Certainty of Faith and Reason.

But

But is this the main Design and Purpose of this Chapter, to *lessen* the Evidence of an External World? To shew, (as he plainly does, and for which I refer my Reader to shew, I say,) that neither *Reason*, nor *Sense*, nor *Revelation*, are sufficient to assure us of the Existence of any such Thing: Nay, that the Argument used by *Des Cartes*, before-mentioned, in which he places his last Resort, falls short, and is deficient, for which we have his own express Words in the 208th Page. And can that same Author say, in the midst of all this, that the Existence of an External World *is a Thing of no Reasonable Doubt, nor to be seriously questioned by any sober Understanding*, &c. Surely it could be no Mistake that he omitted the Word *External*, unless he designed to question his own Understanding, and formally pronounce himself a Sceptick.

Well, you'll say, but it is Matter of Fact that he has argued against *something*. I answer, he has so, for it is evident to Demonstration that he has argued against himself; and not only so, but also as *sceptically* as is possible.

For after all nothing is more evident, than that his *Censure* and *Arguments* proceed upon the very *same Subject*; and that is, not the *External* Existence, but the Existence *simple* of the Natural World. This Natural World

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is sometimes by him called *Bodies*, sometimes the *Visible* or *Sensible* World: Being about to aggrandize the Evidence, or objective Certainty, as to us of his Intelligible or Ideal World, he endeavours to shew, that it is much more certain to us than the *Existence* of the Natural, or *Sensible*, World; and that because we have,

1. *More,*
2. *Better, Reasons to assure us of its Existence.*

These are his very Words, as may be seen in the 188th Page, even in that very Page in which the Censure is found on all those who so much as offer to question the *Existence* of the Natural World. But now the Fact is, that he does question its *Existence* both here, and throughout the whole Course of this Chapter. What can be more evidently *inconsistent*, more evidently *sceptical*, than this Manner of Proceeding? What! Doubt of the *Existence* of *Bodies*, *Sensible* Bodies? Well may this be called *Indulging a Sceptical Humour under the Colour of Philosophical Doubting*. And is this so called too by the very Person who does it? This is not only to be guilty of *Scepticism* himself, but also to be *Self-condemned*.

The Sum of this whole Matter is this : If, by the Existence of the Sensible World, Mr. Norris, in this Censure, is said to mean not the Existence Simple, but the Extra-existence of it, his *Arguments* directly contradict his *Censure*, which is a full Answer to his *Authority* in this Matter. If on the other Hand he be said to mean as he himself speaks, this is, First of all, nothing at all to me, who doubt not of the *Existence*, but only of the *Extraexistence*, of the *Sensible World* : Then, Secondly, he is in *this* as much contrary to himself, as on the *other* Supposition in that he formally doubts of, and even argues against, that which he calls it Scepticism to doubt of. And, Thirdly, which is as bad as any of the rest, he doubts formally of a Point which is not capable of being doubted of, viz. *The simple Existence of the Visible World*. To all which, Lastly, I may, and also must, add this, that this second Supposition is something more than an *If*, it being evidently the Case in Fact, that his whole Discourse in this Place is only of the Existence simple of the Sensible or Visible World; and not a Word of its *Extraexistence*, on the Concession of its *Existence simple*, is so much as mentioned or implied.

I doubt not but on Sight of the Title Page many of my Readers will judge, and be ready to say, surely the whole World
 is

is full of Arguments against so strange an Assertion, as that there is no External World. And perhaps, in this Place, some may wonder that I end here with the Mention of so few Objections: But let such as these try to add to their Number, they may possibly find it more difficult than they imagine.

In the mean Time I expect to be understood by some, when I ask their Pardon for the Trouble I have given them, in thus seriously considering *so many trifling* Objections; Objections which for the most Part have been lame on both their Legs, the Language of Prejudice only, and having scarce so much as an Appearance to introduce them: But indeed I thought I could do no less, considering the Dispositions of far the greatest Part of those whom I have conversed with; who will be so far from blaming me on this Account, that they will be ready, even at this Time, to take Part with these Objections; even such as these I would *please*, if possible; but being too sure of the Event, I have nothing left to do, but to acquit myself, by cutting off all Occasion of Offence which might be taken at my leaving unmentioned, or unanswered, any Objection which I have heard, or found, or which may reasonably be judged I ought to have found: And in this Respect I profess I have done my best, which, I think, is all that can be expected of me. K 2 The

The Conclusion of the *Whole*.

Of the Use and Consequences of the foregoing Treatise.

HAVING demonstrated, as I think, my Point prefix'd in the Title Page, viz. the utter Impossibility of an External World; and supposing also that this is here granted me by my Reader; he has a Right to demand, of what *Use* and *Consequence* is all this to *Men*, or to the *Moral World*.

Now in order to return as plain and distinct an Answer as I can, and can well be expected from me in this Place, to this Question, I wou'd chuse to split it into *Two*, making the Words *Use* and *Consequence* to stand for Two different Things: And I shall begin with the Last, viz. the *Consequences* of this Position, *no External World*. To the Question concerning which I have these Two Things to answer.

First, I know not why my Reader shou'd not take my Word, (I mean 'till he himself has made Inquiry,) when I assure him that the Consequences of this Position are exceeding many in Number: If this will pass, I again

again assure him, that I have found by more than a Ten Years Experience, or Application of it to diverse Purposes, that this is one of the most fruitful Principles that I have ever met with, even of General and Universal Influence in the Field of Knowledge: So that, if it be *True*, as is here supposed, it will open the Way to Ten Thousand other Truths, and also discover as many Things to be Errors, which have hitherto passed for true. But this,

Secondly, May in some Measure appear to my Attentive Reader, even before he has made Inquiry, and tho' he makes some Scruple of believing me on my Word: For he cannot but have taken Notice, that all *Language* not only supposes, but is almost wholly built on the Supposition of, an External World: With *this* is leaven'd all our Common Discourse, and almost every Thing that is found in the Writings of Philosophers: So that with half an Eye it must needs be seen, that were a Man to call all his former Thoughts and Opinions, all he has read in Books, or heard in Conversation, to an Examination or Review, in the Light of this Position, he would find a mighty Work upon his Hands, in correcting only former Errors, setting aside the positive Part of deducing Truths in their Room.

This, I think, is all that can be said in *General*, in Answer to the Question concerning the Consequences of this Position: And I believe my Reasons will be judg'd to be sufficient for not entering into the *particular Deduction* of these Consequences: As *First*, that this would be all over Digression in this Place: And *Secondly*, such a Digression as would swell the Volume to more than Ten Times its present Size: But chiefly *Thirdly*, for that I know myself to be unqualified for so great a Work, which is no less than the compiling a New System, at least of general Knowledge. Perhaps the little which I have here supplied may move some more comprehensive Genius to begin where I conclude, and build something very considerable on the Foundation which is here laid; but I must be allow'd to be a proper Judge even in my own Case, when I profess that I am far from being equal to so vast an Undertaking. However, *Secondly*, I will add a Word or Two concerning the Use of the foregoing Treatise: By this, as distinct from the former Head, I would be understood to mean,

1. The Subject Matters with regard to which it may be of Use.
2. Its particular Usefulness with regard to Religion.
3. The

3. The proper Manner after which it should be us'd.

4th and Lastly, The particular Use and Advantage which I myself propose by it.

First, As to the Subject Matter, it may possibly be ask'd, whether every Thing must pass for *False* which does not square with this *Hypothesis*, supposing it to be True? Or, whether because it is True, that there is no External World, we must therefore use this Language in Discourse, or Writing on every Kind of Subject? To this I answer.

1. That I have in good Measure prevented this Inquiry in my Second Answer to the Second Objection, Part II. where I have shewn that we are at Liberty, and also in some Measure, oblig'd to use the Common Language of the World, notwithstanding that it proceeds almost wholly on the Supposition of an External World: For, *First*, Language is a Creature of God, and therefore Good, viz. for Use, notwithstanding this *Essential* Vanity which belongs to it; by this God spake the World into Being when he said, *Let there be Light, let there be a Firmament, a Sun, Moon, and Stars, &c.* and they were: All these Things were made in the *Beginning*, even in the *Word*, and

Wisdom, and *Will* of God; and therefore in *him* they are *True*, even *Externally True*, according to the Language by which they were will'd into Being, tho' in *themselves* they carry an *Impossibility* of so Existing: But this does not justify the Goodness of this Language with regard to us; or rather justify *us Sinners* in the Use of this Language, without reflecting, *Secondly*, that we are Redeem'd or Recreated by the same Word of God, who has taken on himself the *Iniquity* of all Things; who, as one of us, has us'd this Common Language, and even bore it with him on his Cross; who, by his Spirit in his Apostles, has spoken all the Languages of the World, making thereby every Tongue his own, and who, *Lastly*, in a Word, has pronounc'd every Thing to be clean to those who believe. I answer therefore,

2. That there are certain Subjects which require the Use of this Common Language; and on which, to speak in the Language of *this Hypothesis*, would be both *Ridiculous* and *Unjust*; *Unjust* to the Will, and to the Word, of God, who has made and sanctified Common Language to our Use, and consequently to the Obligation of our Christian Liberty; and *Ridiculous*, in that on several Subjects of Discourse the Use of any other than the Common Ways of Expression wou'd

wou'd be altogether Vain, Nonsensical and Absurd. I might easily give a Thousand Instances of the Truth of this ; but it were Pity to prevent the many Writings of the present Age, who by this wou'd lose their whole Field of Knowledge, with relation to this Subject, and wou'd have nothing left whereby to ridicule what they are incapable of Understanding. I leave it therefore to Pamphleteers, Doggrel Rhimers, and Comedians, to expose the Language of this Treatise, by applying it to improper Subjects: For since the only End of this Kind of Wit is not so much as pretended to be Truth, but only Laughter and Diversion, I am content to be the Subject, and also to laugh for Company, as having no Pretence to the moving of one Smile by any Thing I have here said ; allowing therefore all due Advantage to little Wits of all Sorts and Sizes, I answer,

3. *Thirdly*, That whenever we are, or pretend to be, serious, I wou'd recommend the Language of this Discourse to be used only on Subjects the most *General, Simple, or Universal*, I don't say, *in Philosophy only in General*, or *in this or that Particular Branch of it* ; for I profess to understand but very little of *either*, as *Words and Ideas* have been usually linked together. I say therefore only, as before, the most *Simple, General,*

General or Universal Subjects; Subjects wherein the Question is strictly about Truth, particularly such wherein the Question supposed receives any Alteration from the Supposition or Denial of an External World.

Well, you will say, but then it seems it has but little to do with Religion, which is a Subject best understood or treated of in the Common Ways of speaking: By this I am lead in the

Second Place to consider the particular Usefulness of this Position or Hypothesis with regard to Religion. Accordingly I make Answer;

First, It has been often my Fortune, and may be again, to have this Question put to me by such as have not been able to comprehend the Reasons by which I justify my Point of no External World; which, by a very Natural Progress, has given them a mighty Zeal against the Conclusion. In this Case, their only Refuge to avoid an utter Silence, has been to urge this Question about its Usefulness as to Religion. The Pretence of this is, that Religion is their only Care, or the End of all their Inquiries; so that if it does not immediately appear that this Hypothesis tends to the Promotion of Religion, they are fairly excused from believing, or so much as attending to it.

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But now to such as these, surely nothing can be easier than to return a sufficient Answer. But I think the best, in this Case, is to make none at all. For *first*, it is evident that the End or Drift of this Question is not to urge any Thing against the Truth of my Conclusion, but only to excuse its Authors from so much as inquiring into it. But this certainly is a Point I can never be supposed to contend against whilst I am suffer'd to live out of *Bedlam*. And therefore since this is all that is demanded by this Question, it must needs be very impertinent to go about to Answer it any otherwise than by saying, *Sir, you have free Leave to think of what Subjects you please; especially having chosen the better Part already, viz. Religion, and nothing else, to imploy your Meditations on, &c.* But, *Secondly*, it happens well enough for the Ends of my Discourse at present, that my Reader is here supposed to have inquired already into the Truth of my Conclusion, and also to have discover'd it to be true.

And this gives the Question concerning its Usefulness as to *Religion* a very different Turn and Sense from what it had before. For now tho' it may be the Effect of Curiosity only, yet it very probably may be the Effect of a serious Desire of, farther
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Knowledge, and of a true Regard for Religion, and therefore ought to be so reputed. Whereas the same, as before proceeding, is even designed as a Bar to Knowledge, and is plainly no other than a Religious Disguise. But whatever be the true Cause or Principle of this last, I must needs acknowledge its Right to an Answer. Accordingly I affirm,

Secondly, That I consider the present Treatise, as a Matter of no little Use, or good Consequence, with regard to Religion. That I have found the Truth of this by a long or very considerable Experience. And in a Word, that (be it taken how it will by certain vain Pretenders) I will be bold to pretend, even in my own Behalf, such a real, and even exclusive, Regard for Religion, that I would never have troubled an unwilling World with this Discourse, (notwithstanding the infinite Use which I conceive it to be of with respect to Simple or Universal Truth,) had it not been for its particular Usefulness with respect to Religion; and consequently for the Benefit of those few who I expect will find the Truth of what I here affirm.

I am sensible this will pass for very slender *Authority* with *some*, and perhaps too for an *Objection* with *others*; unless for their Satisfaction I *produce* the Points concerning

ing which I affirm this Discourse to be of Use. But I have proved my Point already, viz. all that is in my Title Page, and I shall prove no more, 'till I am aware of the Success of this, or hear from my Reader himself, what farther Demands he may have upon me. Nevertheless, that I may avoid the Imputation of having passed over but the *Name* of an *Objection*, without an Answer, I will go out of the Track of my intended Method so far, as to charge myself with the Debt of one Instance of this Sort; and that is, the Point of the *Real Presence* of Christ's Body in the *Eucharist*, on which the Papists have grafted the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*.

Now nothing, I think, can be more evident, than that both the *Sound* and *Explanation* of this Important Doctrine are founded altogether on the Supposition of *External* Matter. So that if this be removed, there is not any Thing left, whereon to build so much as the Appearance of a Question.

For if after this it be inquired whether the *Substance* of the Bread in this Sacrament be not changed into the *Substance* of the Body of Christ, the *Accidents* or Sensible Appearances remaining as before; or suppose this shou'd be affirm'd to be the Fact, or at least Possible, it may indeed be shewn to be

be untrue or impossible, on the Supposition of an External World, from certain consequential Absurdities which attend it; but to remove an *External World*, is to prick it in its *punctum saliens*, or quench its very vital Flame. For if there is no *External Matter*, the very *Distinction* is lost between the *Substance* and *Accidents*, or sensible Species of Bodies, and *these last* will become the *sole Essence* of material Objects. So that if *these* are supposed to remain as before, there is no possible room for the Supposal of any *Change*, in that the Thing supposed to be changed is here shewn to be *nothing* at all.

I have chosen to Instance in this, rather than any other Point of *Divinity* or *Religion*, because this of *Transubstantiation* is one of the most *important* Doctrines of the *Roman Church*; which Church at the same time happens to hold the *Insufficiency* of the *Scriptures*. Now as these *Two Opinions* happen to concur in the same Persons, it may possibly prove an *Umbrage* to certain weak and tender Spirits, as if my affirming only without Proof, that the present Treatise is of such mighty Use, with regard to Religion, were an *Intrenchment* on the *Sufficiency* of the *Gospel Revelation*, and consequently an *Approach* towards the *Error* of *Popery*. This is the *Objection* hinted at before, viz. the *Great and Mighty Objection*,
on,

on, for the sake of which I have departed from my Method, and broken my Resolution. But 'tis high Time however now to return and proceed.

The *Third* Thing which I proposed to speak to, is the *proper Manner* after which I would desire this Treatise to be made Use of. And here

Let the *First* Thing be, to read it thoroughly and attentively. It is not so long but it may be read more than once without any very considerable Expence of Time. However, let it so be read as to be perfectly understood to be either true or false. If *false*, I wou'd desire my Reader to give me Notice of the Discovery, that I may discharge myself of the Guilt of having published a Falshood in so confident a Manner; and also such a Falshood as bids open Defiance to so considerable a Part of whatsoever Men have hitherto pretended to know. This I think is a fair Request. But my Reader is here supposed to understand it in another Light, or to look upon it to be true.

If so, I must nevertheless desire him to imploy all his Skill or Attention for some Time to make it as familiar as possible to his Understanding. If he fails in this he will find his Assent slide from him he knows not how; and he will come in a little Time to an effectual Disbelief of it, whilst he

he continues to believe it. This is the manner of Men, with respect to Truths, either very *Simple*, or peculiarly *Religious*; there lying an equal Prejudice or Opposition of Sense against both these kinds of Truths. This, by the Way, is some sort of Argument that there is a nearer Affinity between these Two kinds of Truth than is commonly imagined; but I am content in this Place to suppose them very different. And be they as different as they will, yet sure I am, that the Subject of this Treatise is of the Number of those which make the least Impression, even after they are assented to; or against which the strongest Prejudices are found to lye. For nothing can be more evident to the *First* or *Natural* Apprehensions of Men, than that even the Sensible or Visible World is External. And I believe I shall find enough of this from my Experience with other Persons, to make it needless to attest the Truth of it upon my own. If so, and if it be true notwithstanding that there is no External World, I must again desire my Reader to use his utmost Diligence and Attention to render this Truth as *sensible* to himself as possible; which he will find to be done only by a very frequent Meditation on, or Exercise of himself in it. And here, (if I may for Decency Sake be allowed to press this Matter any farther,) I wou'd advise him. *First,*

First, To exercise himself for a little Time in Writing *on*, or rather *against*, it. Let him try to add to the Objections which I have already consider'd, or respond afresh to the Answers which I have given to them; and perhaps his Surprize to find the little Effect of this Experiment, may add some Grains to the Firmness of his Assent.

After this it wou'd confirm him not a little to make the same Experiment in Discourse with others, whether *Learned* or *Unlearned* matters not much, if I have rightly observed; unless it be that the Learned in this Case, usually make the least pertinent Objections. This Method will in some Measure engage even *Self-love* on the Side of Truth, which will mightily help to overbear the Force of common Prejudice against it.

But Lastly, if after all this Endeavour he yet find it difficult (as I believe he certainly will) to keep the Edge of his Attention fixed, so as not to think it still more evident that the Visible World is, than that it is not External, let him practise with himself an easie, but a very useful, Art, which is to use himself to meditate on this Subject with either his Eye or Imagination fixed on a Looking-glass. This, he may

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remember, was one of the *Instances* given (*Part. I. Chap. I. Sect. I.*) to shew, that the *seeming* Externeity of a Visible Object is no Argument of its *real* Externeity: And it has since appear'd that all Visible Objects are equally External; or that *that* which is usually called *the* Visible World, is indeed no more External than what is usually called the *Reflection* or *Image* of it in a *Looking-glass*. Nevertheless it is much easier to apprehend or believe this, with Respect to Objects seen in a Glass, than to such as are seen out of a Glass; and it is only my Reader's *Ease* that I am at this Time consulting.

Now by these and such like Means, I suppose, even my *Aristotelian* Reader (who by his Studies has been long unqualified to receive or apprehend pure *unbodied* Truths) will become Master of this Subject, as simple as it is, or understand it with the same, or some Degree of the same, *Ease* or *Feeling*, wherewith he usually understands Ideas that are more Complex. And if so, he is prepared for all the Ends and Uses of it. The chief of which is this.

Secondly, To carry it about with him, and use it as one wou'd do a *Key*, or *Mirror*, or almost any other kind of Mechanical or Useful Instrument. To carry, I say,
not

not the Body of the present Treatise, or so much as one Argument of it, in his Memory, but only *the Conclusion*, viz. *no External World*, which is just what is in the Inscription or Title Page.

With this, as with a *Key*, he will find an easie Solution of almost all the general Questions which he has been used to account very difficult, or perhaps indissoluble.

And as a *Mirror*, held, as it were, in his Hand before the Writings of others, it will discover to him many Errors, where before he little expected to find them; besides that, it will open to him a new Scene of Truths, which have not hitherto been so much as inquired after.

In a Word, let him read and think with this one Proposition always present in his Mind, and I am perswaded he will need no Assistance of mine to make it appear to him, that it is of the greatest Use and Consequence in the Inquiry after Truth.

And now I have nothing to add, but a Word or Two concerning the *particular Use or Advantage*, which I myself propose from having written this Discourse. And that is,

First, The Probability, by this Means, of having the Truth of it thorowly examined: Which is rarely done to any Purpose in
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Discourse, and indeed in any *private* Way ; besides that, I wou'd consult the common Benefit as well as my own.

Secondly, and *Lastly*, that by this Means I have freed myself from many *Difficulties* ; in Case I should live to appear in Public on any Subject, which is either a Consequence of this, or any Way depends on, or interferes with it. I speak this from an Experience very often repeated. And this, at last, has reduced me to this Necessity, either never to attempt to write on any but the most *ordinary* and *popular* Subjects, (which is a Work I have too good Reason to leave to others,) or resolve in the first Place to set heartily about this, and establish it once for all ; as I hope I have here done.

If so, I have no more to do for the Time to come, but only to *refer* to what I have here written and published : Which is a Liberty I may possibly reap the Advantage of in Discourse on some other Subject ; but which I shall be sure to use, and make the most of, in Case this shou'd be replied to by any Partial, Unfair, or Scoffing Adversary.

F I N I S.